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Free to Deployed Areas

US tried to free hostages held in Syria

Failed mission sought to rescue slain photojournalist, other American captives

By ADAM GOLDMAN
 AND KAREN DEYOUNG
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. Special Operations forces staged an unsuccessful operation this summer to rescue photojournalist James Foley

and other Americans being held in Syria by Islamic State militants, according to senior Obama administration officials.

The attempt, involving several dozen U.S. commandos, one of whom was injured in a fierce firefight with the militants, was the

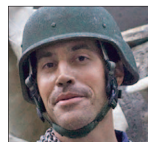
first known U.S. ground operation in Syria since the country's descent into civil war.

It came after at least six European hostages freed by the militants last spring had been debriefed by U.S. intelligence.

"The president authorized ear-

lier this summer an operation to attempt the rescue of American citizens held by ISIL," one of the abbreviations used to refer to the Islamic State, said one of two senior officials who provided information on the mission.

SEE RESCUE ON PAGE 7



Foley



RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES

Displaced Iraqis destitute, hopeful
 US will continue airstrikes | **Page 6**

JOSHUA L. DeMOTTS/Stars and Stripes

Displaced Iraqis find shelter in a sweltering, unfinished commercial building in Irbil, Iraq. They fled their homes in fear of the Islamic State's advance in the Mosul region.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If she wants, she can do anything. She is the biggest power in the world."

— Martin Banni, who recently fled the Islamic State advance and is overseeing the refugee camp at Ankawa, Iraq, saying that those displaced are hoping America will save them

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MILITARY

Leaders lift alcohol ban in Ramstein dorms

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Unaccompanied airmen on Ramstein and Kapaun Air Station once again can enjoy alcohol in their living quarters.

Base leaders announced in a series of town hall meetings Wednesday that they were lifting a 17-month ban on alcohol possession and consumption in and around the dormitories. The easiest step would have been "leaving the policy in place," said Brig. Gen. Patrick X. Mordente, 86th Airlift Wing commander, addressing about 75 airmen Wednesday night with his command chief, Chief Master Sgt. Frank H. Batten III. "We didn't think it was the right thing, though."

About 1,100 single or unaccompanied airmen in grades E-1 through E-3 live in Air Force dormitories in the Kaiserslautern Military Community, according to statistics from base officials.

Mordente and Batten — neither of whom was at Ramstein when the ban was implemented — said easing the ban was about trusting their airmen to do the right, responsible thing and to act like professional airmen on and off duty.

"I'm a firm believer in treating airmen like airmen, treating them like professionals, holding them to a standard," Mordente said in an interview. "Quite honestly, we looked at it; we have confidence in our airmen. Why not go ahead and lift the ban? I think they can do this, I really do."

Older dorm residents, especially, "can't understand why I'm not allowed to have a glass of wine in my room, but I'm allowed to carry a weapon and defend the front gate or I'm allowed to fix an aircraft worth millions of dollars," Batten said, noting that about 60 percent of dorm residents are over 21. "So, it's come down to that professional development part: 'Hey, my leadership says they trust me, but yet they don't trust me with this part of it.'"

Mordente's predecessor, Brig. Gen. Charles K. Hyde, banned alcohol in the dormitories in early March 2013, after a series of alcohol-related misconduct. In 2012, the year before the ban was implemented, 50 alcohol-related incidents involved airmen in grades E-1 to E-3, according to base officials. In 2013, with the ban in place for nearly 10 months that year, the number rose to 66. As of May 23, 2014, 19 alcohol-related incidents involved airmen in ranks E-1 to E-3.

Mordente said the decision to implement the ban was the right one at the time.

"He did what he had to do to get a situation

under control, a situation where we had airmen hanging off of balconies screaming at 2 o'clock in the morning that they've been drunk every night in Europe and they've drunk one more night," Mordente said.

But most of the airmen who were living in the dormitories then are no longer at Ramstein, Mordente said.

After comparing the statistics on alcohol-related incidents before and after the ban's implementation, Mordente said, officials couldn't find a consistent decrease in misconduct. Incidents tended to be cyclical.

"You couldn't look at the data and say 'You know what, the ban was lifted on that day,'" he said in an interview.

Though the ban on alcohol wasn't driven by sexual assaults in the dorms, wing leaders consulted with sexual assault prevention experts on Ramstein about the policy, given the correlation of alcohol and sexual assaults across the military, Mordente said.

A Pentagon report released in May showed that two-thirds of sexual assaults across the military in fiscal 2013 involved alcohol use by the victim, the assailant or both.

'The ban was about holding airmen to a standard.'

Brig. Gen. Patrick X. Mordente

"I said 'Please show me the data and make sure there's not something here that I'm missing,'" he said. They told the commander that sexual assault, from an Air Force perspective, is a much broader issue, he said. "It's not about just the dorms. It's about downtown K-town, it's about 24/7, it's about being airmen, it's about treating people with respect," Mordente said.

"The ban was not about sexual assault. The ban was about holding airmen to a standard. Lifting the ban is the fact that we, the leadership team, think our airmen can maintain that standard."

On Wednesday evening, as it was getting dark, young people with beer cans were seen walking or sitting by the dorm pavilions.

Airman 1st Class Sarah Nixon, 24, an aircraft maintainer from Birmingham, Ala., said airmen in the dorms had been excited all day about news that would be lifted.

"I'm excited only because I'm older and it'd be really nice to have my wine at night," she said.

She's concerned about how the younger airmen will handle the privilege. "At Ramstein, you only have to be 18 to drink, so that worries me a little," she said.

Airman 1st Class Adam Nunez, 22, a secu-



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick X. Mordente

ritary forces gate guard from New Jersey, said, "I think we'll be just fine. I see no issues." He added, "I really appreciate that they have that trust in us, that we can really go out there and be responsible airmen."

Others have doubts.

Among them is Airman 1st Class Philip Aiken, 21, a cyberoperations helpdesk technician from Tucson, Ariz., who said he doesn't drink alcohol.

He said after the evening town hall that he was skeptical about easing the ban, "simply because I know there are a lot of airmen in the dorms who don't have a lot of self-control."

"It will definitely be interesting," Batten said very few dorm residents have voiced support to him for keeping the ban.

Nevertheless, he said, "I think that we're going to have airmen that disagree with the decision we made, but we're not out of bounds with the rest of the Air Force or the rest of society. These airmen are of drinking age and they're able to drink now. We're just allowing them to have alcohol in their dorms."

Ramstein was the only Air Force base in Europe to prohibit alcohol in the dormitories, according to Air Force officials. Dormitories at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska, have been alcohol-free since 2002.

Mordente told airmen that wing leaders would have no qualms about bringing the ban back, if warranted.

"I will tell you this, as fast as the ban was lifted, it can be put back in place," he said. "And if the leadership team believes that, for the betterment of the airmen as a whole, we need to do that, we will do it."

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MILITARY



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Tugboats assist the USS George Washington as it pulls out of Busan, South Korea. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has recommended the carrier be retired in 2016, a move that Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert has said he opposes.

Navy leader details Pacific boost

Greenert says spending plan calls for additional ships in critical region

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's top leader Wednesday released details of a five-year navigation plan that calls for increasing the forward presence of ships to about 120 by 2020, up from this year's average of 97.

It also calls for a single "cyber-safe" authority to protect the service's networks.

The plan, which is tied to the Navy's 2015-19 spending submission, would continue the Obama administration's rebalance to the Pacific by expanding the number of ships in the region to 65 in 2019, an increase of 15 from this year, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert wrote in the four-page plan.

The Navy's "most capable platforms will operate in the Western Pacific" including the newest DDG class of guided-missile destroyers, joint high-speed vessels, Poseidon surveillance planes, Growler fighter jets and other upgraded aircraft, such as the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter.

An additional attack submarine will join three already in Guam in 2015.

‘Despite likely sequestration in 2016, our priority is to operate forward where it matters, when it matters, and be ready to address a wide range of threats and contingencies.’

Adm. Jonathan Greenert
chief of naval operations

Rear Adm. William Lescher, the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, told reporters in March that the service was cutting expenses by halving the number of F-35Cs it would buy during the next five years from 69 to 36. The Navy has requested \$125.2 billion for fiscal year 2015, about \$400 million less than this year's enacted budget.

"Despite likely sequestration in 2016, our priority is to operate forward where it matters, when it matters, and be ready to address a wide range of threats and contingencies," Greenert wrote.

The plan, however, made no reference to the Navy's goal of assembling a 306-ship fleet by 2020, as it projected in a 30-year plan submitted to Congress in July. Nor did it broach the subject of with-

er the service will maintain its number of aircraft carriers at 11.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has recommended the carrier USS George Washington be retired in 2016, a move that Greenert has said he opposes.

The plan would increase ships in the Middle East from the current 30 to about 40 in 2019. The 10 patrol craft that now operate out of Bahrain will be joined by four littoral combat ships by the end of 2019.

A "low-cost and small footprint" naval presence is planned for the continents of Africa and South America, Greenert wrote. Beginning in 2015, the Navy will deploy one hospital ship a year to South America, followed by one coastal patrol ship each year beginning in 2016.

The plan did not specify deployments to Africa.

Greenert calls on the Navy to sustain "our advantage in the undersea domain" as it adds the 12th Virginia-class attack submarine to the fleet in 2015, with eight more expected to join by 2019.

An unspecified number of guided-missile cruisers and dock landing ships will be modernized to extend their service lives, which Greenert conceded was not his "first choice," but "budget limits compel us to take this course."

To beef up cybersecurity, the Navy is establishing a single "cybersafe" authority to manage the service's networks, platforms and systems "cradle to grave," the plan stated.

"We are also proceeding to recruit, train and hire almost 1,000 cyber operators and are on track to form 40 cyber mission teams by the end of 2016," Greenert wrote.

Greenert is expected to release a position report later in this year that reviews the Navy's progress in implementing the objectives of previous navigation plans.

Stars and Stripes reporter Erik Slavin contributed to this report.
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DOD puts chill on ice bucket challenge

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon dumped a bucket of cold water on servicemembers who want to take the ice bucket challenge in uniform.

The stunt has become popular in recent weeks as a way of raising awareness and millions of research dollars for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. Participants in the challenge dump a bucket of ice water over their heads and challenge friends to do the same or donate \$100 to the ALS Association. Many people donate even after getting doused.

An Army spokeswoman cited the Defense Department's Office of General Counsel Standards of Conduct Office to clarify the service's position. She said uniforms and civilian clothes "clearly showing an Army relationship" cannot be worn by employees performing the challenge and posting a video online. A soldier also can't give his Army affiliation aloud or his rank, the spokeswoman, Tatjana Christian, wrote in an email.

"ALS Association is a national non-profit organization," Christian wrote. "As such, participating in this event is subject to concerns about implied endorsement."

The popular stunt has swept Facebook and social media in recent weeks, raising awareness and millions of dollars to fight the disease.

An Aug. 1 Facebook post by Peter Frates, who has ALS, is credited with making the challenge viral; the original video dates back to June. Other Facebook users picked up on the challenge before it caught on with celebrities and politicians.

Servicemembers have also joined along. The Navy football team and coaches took ice baths last Friday while wearing Navy football T-shirts. Members of the Navy Blue Angels got soaked in their flight suits on Saturday. The Air Force football coach took the challenge in a jersey on Monday.

Two uniformed midshipmen dumped ice buckets on the superintendent and commandant of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, who then called out other service academy leaders to take the challenge. Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, superintendent at West Point, appeared to have accepted the challenge, with several other officers and senior enlisted, according to the details of a YouTube video posted by West Point.

That video was removed two days ago, soon after it was posted.

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4 members of Afghan army injured in bombing

KABUL, Afghanistan — An early morning explosion from a remote-controlled bomb wounded four members of the Afghan National Army in eastern Kabul on Thursday.

The incident occurred about 6:30 a.m. near a bus stop frequented by Afghan army members going to work, a spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the explosion through a spokesman, who claimed three Afghan soldiers were killed in

the blast. The Taliban frequently exaggerate casualties from their attacks.

Though generally considered safer than many areas of the country, Kabul continues to see sporadic attacks on foreigners, servicemembers by the NATO-led International Security Assis-

tance Force and Afghan security forces. Thursday's attack comes a day after an ISAF service member was stabbed to death in Kabul. That attack occurred near the Kabul airport, police and Interior Ministry spokesmen said.

news@stripes.com

MILITARY

AAFES makes case for all vets to shop online

By TOM PHILPOTT

Allowing 18.8 million honorably discharged veterans to shop online through military exchange services, which also operate brick-and-mortar department stores and concessions on base, could boost store profits enough to pump more than \$100 million back into base quality-of-life programs.

That's part of the "business case" made by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service to the Department of Defense's Executive Resale Board this month, where Navy officials still raised concerns over the idea.

Thomas C. Shull, chief executive officer of AAFES, proposed to defense officials several months ago that veterans be allowed to shop online through exchange service websites, to gain the same discounts on thousands of department store items that on-base shoppers enjoy.

AAFES already is working with an outside contractor to modernize and expand its website for online shopping of current patrons, which include active-duty, Reserve and National Guard servicemembers, military retirees and families.

Senior policy officials who oversee Navy and Marine Corps

MILITARY UPDATE

exchange services, however, have challenged the idea, fearing "benefit creep" for veterans beyond online shopping into other military support programs. They also believe hurdles to implementing online shopping for all veterans will be higher than AAFES predicts, particularly in finding a foolproof way to verify veteran status and the character of their discharges.

Defense officials, meanwhile, have signaled they want unanimous support of service branches before they will embrace such a dramatic expansion of discount shopping, even if only online. The Executive Resale Board, which resolves disagreements between elements of the military resale system, recently asked Shull to present a business case for opening online shopping to any veteran with an honorable discharge.

Board members representing every service are reviewing that report with comments due back Aug. 29. The board's next scheduled meeting, however, isn't until

Nov. 4. Shull told us earlier he hoped to have his plan approved by Veterans' Day, Nov. 11, and have the benefit available to all qualified veterans a year later.

"Each month veterans are denied the opportunity to shop online through armed services exchanges costs the [Department of Defense] \$8 million to \$14 million in earnings and [base Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs] \$5 million to \$9 million in dividends," the AAFES report states.

Here are other points it makes in favor of a veterans' online shopping benefit, what Shull's team now refers to as the "VOSB":

Benefit deserved. Many servicemembers forced to leave the military in the next 12 to 18 months in a force drawdown will have deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan but won't have a chance to serve full, 20-year careers, the report notes. The offer of online discount shopping through exchanges "is a modest way to show appreciation."

Also, offering veterans online discounts would "encourage ongoing involvement in the military community and sends a clear message to future recruits that our nation values and appreciates every individual's service."

Lean times for exchanges. Be-

cause of the drawdown and falling exchange patronage, store profits and exchange "dividends" to support morale, welfare and recreational activities on base "will decrease materially." Servicemembers and families will feel the impact on support programs.

From 2011 to 2013, total AAFES sales fell 10.1 percent. If AAFES had not taken aggressive steps to cut overhead, earnings would have fallen sharply along with dividends to quality-of-life programs. Though AAFES expects to come close to its target of \$300 million in revenues in 2014, erosion of the customer base continuing and could reduce store revenues to less than \$100 million by 2017.

"Unlike commercial enterprises," bases exchanges "can sell only within a finite and shrinking customer base," the report says. Exchanges need to expand patronage to veterans and AAFES is well prepared to do so.

Veterans would shop. Given the value that military retirees place on exchange shopping, spending an average of \$668 there annually, the 90 percent of nonretiree veterans who can't shop on base could be expected to take advantage of shopping discounts even if available only online.

The report projects total exchange sales increasing across a wide range of possibilities, from a low of \$226 million annually to a high of \$1.13 billion. That would generate between \$60 million and \$108 million annually in added dividends to support MWR and quality-of-life programs without any increase in taxpayer support of base stores, according to AAFES' analysis.

The report discusses possible pros and cons of online shopping for veterans and finds only one "true" con — inaction by the department.

Tricare test coverage

A month later than expected, the Defense Health Agency has published online its list of genetic or laboratory-designed tests Tricare now covers under a three-year demonstration that will end on July 18, 2017, if not extended.

Here's the link: <http://www.tricare.mil/dt>.

Beneficiaries who had to pay for any of those 35 tests since coverage first was denied back to Jan. 1, 2013, might be eligible for reimbursement.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or Twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.



ARMANDO R. LINON/Stars and Stripes

Talking with troops

U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work, right, speaks with a soldier Thursday near an A-10 Warthog during a visit to Osan Air Base in South Korea. Work, who arrived in South Korea during the annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise, spoke to U.S. troops about a wide range of topics, from the crisis in Iraq to the future of the Air Force's A-10 fleet.

McCain vows support for Tomahawk, A-10

By JOE FERGUSON

The (Tucson) Arizona Daily Star

An 18-foot Tomahawk cruise missile shared the stage with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., here on Tuesday as he addressed a room full of Raytheon Missile Systems employees.

The state's senior senator did all of the talking, but the 3-decade-old missile was the main attraction, with McCain saying he was able to help receive a Department of Defense decision to cut \$82 million in funding for more missiles.

The decision to cut funding to the aging missile — with a replacement nowhere in sight for at least a decade — was short-sighted, McCain said, noting it was easy to persuade his Senate colleagues to restore funding.

Amid tough language about serious threats to global security

and an absence of leadership on the world stage from the Obama administration, McCain offered bits of good news for the local aerospace industry.

They included:

■ Hundreds of millions of dollars committed for Raytheon and the Israeli-owned Rafael Advanced Defense Systems to jointly produce the Iron Dome system.

■ His firm support for a modernization program for the Tomahawk missile system, extending the useful life of the cruise missile.

■ Progress on a complicated, multiparty land swap near the Tucson International Airport that would allow Raytheon to expand.

■ Continued support to save the A-10 from being mothballed, saying the Pentagon is "nuts" for trying to save money by replacing it with the F-35.

Airman sentenced to 4 more years in second sex case

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An airman sentenced in 2013 to 10 years in prison for sexual contact with a child was found guilty on child pornography charges in a second court-martial last month in the United States.

Airman basic Johnny A. Escobar was tried on July 11 at Moody

Air Force Base, Ga., during a brief reprieve from serving his sentence at Fort Leavenworth, according to a news release from the 31st Fighter Wing. Escobar was a member of the Aviano-based wing while serving with the 731st Munitions Squadron at Camp Darby.

In the newest court-martial,

he was found guilty of indecent exposure as well as distributing and possessing child pornography. The offenses reportedly came to light during an Office of Special Investigation probe after his initial case was settled. A former staff sergeant, Escobar was sentenced to an additional four years in prison. He

was found not guilty on charges of raping his ex-wife.

In his first court-martial, he pleaded guilty to charges of engaging in sexual contact with a minor, taking indecent liberties with a minor, engaging in indecent conduct with a minor and producing and possessing child pornography.

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VETERANS

Lawsuit targets VA policy for same-sex benefits

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Advocacy groups filed a lawsuit here this week challenging the Department of Veterans Affairs on its new policy denying benefits to same-sex spouses who live in states that do not recognize gay marriage.

The VA policy issued in June “writes inequality right back” into the law after a landmark ruling last year that struck down sections of the Defense of Marriage Act and forced the federal government to recognize same-sex couples for a variety of benefits, attorneys for the American Military Partner Association argued in a complaint filed Monday in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington.

The department issued its new policy in June after it completed a review of the DOMA decision ordered by the Obama administration. It requires that veterans and their same-sex partners lived in a state that permitted gay marriage at the time of their union or lived in one of those states during the time they earned VA benefits, which include disability pay, home loan guarantees, death pensions and burial rights.

“No member of our community should be left behind just because their home state continues to discriminate against their marriage,” according to a released statement by Susan Sommer, director of constitutional litigation at Lambda Legal, a nonprofit advocate for the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people that helped file the lawsuit.

In its argument before the circuit court, the AMPA says the ruling last year on DOMA found that it is unconstitutional to keep federal benefits from legally married same-sex couples.

“The court’s opinion specifically singled out ... among DOMA’s unconstitutional effects the deprivation of veterans’ benefits to same-sex spouses, including denying these veterans and their spouses the dignity and final respect of the right to burial together in veterans’ cemeteries,” according to the legal complaint.

The VA is withholding benefits from some couples who lived or served in states that do not recognize the unions, despite controversy and legal challenges over those laws.

There are active legal challenges against same-sex marriage bans in 13 states, the National Conference of State Legislatures reported. Meanwhile, the rest of the country is split with 19 states and the District of Columbia recognizing the marriages and 31 states and two U.S. territories that bar them.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to delay its appeals court decision allowing gay marriage in Virginia, again throwing the law in that state into doubt. The state was set to begin recognizing unions performed in Virginia as well as other states

on Thursday before the Supreme Court put on the brakes without providing an explanation for the move, according to media reports.

In recent years, barriers to gay equality have fallen in quick succession — the military lifted its ban on openly gay troops in 2011, many states have legalized same-sex marriage, and the fall of DOMA led to an overhaul of policies at federal agencies.

The debate over veterans’ benefits such as disability payments, death pension benefits and burial

rights is a new legal frontier for the civil rights movement.

“Having weathered the federal government’s past, longstanding discrimination against them, lesbian and gay veterans and their families find themselves once again deprived of equal rights and earned benefits by the government they served and the nation for which they sacrificed,” the legal complaint says.

When approached for this story, the VA said it does not comment on open lawsuits but did provide

some details on its same-sex marriage benefits policy.

Veterans with gay spouses are required to meet the residency standards due to a section of federal law governing VA benefits that still exists despite the DOMA decision. The VA made its June policy decision based on the law.

“In determining whether or not a person is or was the spouse of a veteran, their marriage shall be proven as valid for the purposes of all laws administered by the Secretary according to the law

of the place where the parties resided at the time of the marriage or the law of the place where the parties resided when the right to benefits accrued,” the federal code reads.

Meanwhile, the department has begun processing all claims and applications involving same-sex marriages that were previously being held by program offices due to the review of the DOMA decision.

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CRISIS IN IRAQ



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA L. D. MOTT/Stars and Stripes

Above: Martin Banni, center, a seminarian, is responsible for the Christian camp in Irbil, Iraq, which utilizes an unfinished building. Below: Displaced Iraqis find shelter in a sweltering unfinished commercial building in Irbil, Iraq, Aug. 20, 2014. They fled their homes in fear of the Islamic State's advance in the Mosul region.

Thousands of destitute and fearful Christians hopeful the US will continue in Iraq

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

IRBIL, Iraq — The elderly and exhausted lie listless on thin mattresses strewn on concrete floors in a half-finished warehouse — they are among thousands of Iraqi Christians who have fled Islamic State militants overrunning their towns, finding refuge in the Kurdish-controlled north.

In the Ankawa suburb of the Kurdish capital, Irbil, a makeshift camp for the displaced has been established on four levels of a commercial building under construction behind a row of shops. At night, the hum of generators, smell of wood-burning stoves and low, diffuse light give the place a dystopian feel.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates 200,000 people have fled to the Kurdish region since early August as the Islamic State has expanded its territory, pushing to the edges of areas under Kurdish control.

Islamic State militants have been blamed for kidnapping and slaughtering people of non-Muslim faiths who refuse to convert to Islam, including Christians.

Local churches have donated food and water.

Plastic tarpaulins with U.N. markings screen off sleeping areas and there is a row of latrines at one end of the building. Martin Banni, 23, a seminarian with the Chaldean Catholic Church, who himself recently fled the Islamic State advance, is overseeing the camp at Ankawa, which is home to 1,000 families. Most came from Karamlash and Quaraqosh, two Christian towns near Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, which the Islamic State seized in June as Iraqi forces fled.

The Christians started arriving two weeks ago, Banni said.

"They escaped with just their clothes and I.D. cards and money," he said. "Many forgot important things. I escaped with just my clothes and passport."

Those who fled feared beheading and rape by the Islamic State forces, he said.

Nadeem Elijah, 38, was still in Karamlash when it was overrun by the Islamists and found himself trapped in his home with his mother and brother as armed militants roamed the streets.



Each day, Islamic State fighters came to the house and threatened the family if they didn't convert to Islam, he said.

Eventually, Elijah said, they made a break for Irbil. When they reached the last Islamic State checkpoint on the road to Kurdish-controlled territory, militants confiscated all their money before letting them pass, he said.

Banni said America was partly responsible for the suffering, blaming Iraq's instability on the U.S. decision to disband the Iraqi army after the 2003 U.S. invasion to topple Saddam Hussein. However, he added that the problems are also of Iraqis' own making.

"We are many religions," Banni said. "We fight about many things. We need to say we are Iraqis before anything else."

Now, those displaced are hoping America will save them, he said.

"If she wants, she can do anything," he said of the United States. "She is the biggest power in the world."

President Barack Obama authorized airstrikes Aug. 7 in part

to protect Yazidis, members of a religious sect, who were trapped on a mountain at Sinjar by Islamic State forces who flushed them from their homes. The strikes were also authorized to protect U.S. personnel in Irbil, as the militants advanced on Kurdish-held territory.

Last week, the U.S. expanded airstrikes to aid Kurdish and Iraqi forces as they pushed back against Islamic State fighters, forcing them from the critical Mosul Dam.

The U.S. should continue to bomb Islamic State targets until its fighters leave the Christian villages they have occupied and the displaced can go home, Banni said.

Amir Sulask Ben, a bank manager from Karakush, fled to Irbil last week with his extended family and thousands of frightened neighbors ahead of the Islamic State advance, he said.

The townsfolk scattered, with some heading for nearby cities such as Dohuk and others crossing the border into Turkey, he said.

Life for the displaced is hard.

"It's too hot and there are many women and children," Ben said. "All of them are very tired."

The U.N. refugee agency this week began an airlift of aid into Irbil, where the displaced are living rough in schools, mosques, churches and unfinished buildings similar to those at Ankawa.

Thousands of tents, plastic sheets, kitchen sets and jerry cans will also be trucked into Kurdistan from Turkey and Iran, UNHCR said.

An estimated 1.2 million Iraqis have been uprooted since the start of the year, including some 600,000 fleeing Islamic State advances in Anbar province since January, and 600,000 displaced in and around Mosul and Sinjar since August, UNHCR reported.

The U.N. is looking to set up more than a dozen camps across Iraq with room for 140,000 people. The displaced have also gathered in the provinces of Sulaymaniyah, Diyala and Kirkuk and the Iraqi government has set up three centers for the displaced in Baghdad, according to UNHCR.

The swift advances by the Islamic State were due in part to sectarian divisions in Iraq, with many Sunnis disillusioned about being shut out by the minority Shiite-led government initially throwing support to the Islamic State fighters.

Ben, the bank manager taking shelter at the Ankawa camp, said his family is split on what to do. His wife wants to go home eventually, but he thinks they should leave Iraq — perhaps, try to join relatives in the U.S.

The experience has left him distrustful of his fellow countrymen.

"I suspect all Muslims are Daash," he said, referring to the Islamic State group by its Arabic acronym.

The Islamic State group and its supporters blame Iraqi Christians for the American bombing campaign, he said.

"We want America to attack Daash," he said. "If no Americans attack, then Daash will stay. If no Americans attack, Daash will be here [in Irbil] in 10 days."

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CRISIS IN IRAQ

Extra troops to protect facilities around Baghdad

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The State Department has asked the Pentagon to send additional troops to Iraq to be stationed "in and around Baghdad" to protect diplomatic installations.

One official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity, said that the number of personnel requested is fewer than 300.

"Military planners are considering it" but no decisions have been made, the official said.

The official could not provide a timeline for when the Pentagon would decide.

Another official told Stars and Stripes that the additional troops, if deployed, would go to the capital to provide extra security for the American Embassy and other facilities.

In recent months, U.S. officials have

feared that the embassy, one of the largest in the world, could potentially come under threat from Islamic State militants.

There are about 850 American troops in Iraq, including 100 or so that are part of the long-standing Office of Security Cooperation.

In June, the Defense Department sent about 450 servicemembers to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities in Baghdad as well as the Baghdad International Airport, which could be used to evacuate American citizens from Iraq if necessary.

The June deployment was precipitated by sweeping advances across Iraq by the Islamic State. Iraqi security forces, buttressed by Shiite militia, have so far been able to prevent significant numbers of militants from reaching the capital.

The official who spoke to reporters is not aware of any specific intelligence about imminent threats that might have prompted the State Department request.

Meanwhile, U.S. military aircraft are continuing to bomb Islamic State targets near the Mosul Dam.

American fighters, attack aircraft and drones conducted 14 strikes Wednesday and another six on Thursday against insurgent Humvees, improvised explosive device emplacements, mortars, and trucks in the area, according to U.S. Central Command.

All U.S. planes involved exited the area safely, CENTCOM said.

Since Aug. 8, when the Pentagon began bombing militant targets at the request of the Iraqi government, the U.S. military has carried out 90 strikes across the country. The majority of those have occurred in recent days as the U.S. began providing air support to Iraqi military and Kurdish peshmerga forces operating on the ground against militants near the Mosul Dam, according to CENTCOM.

Iraqi forces are now in control of the

dam, according to DOD.

The latest rounds of airstrikes and the weighing of whether to send more troops to Iraq comes soon after the Islamic State released a video Tuesday showing the execution of American James Foley, a freelance journalist who previously worked for Stars and Stripes.

The militants said the killing was in retaliation for recent U.S. military moves against them, and they threatened to kill another American reporter who they have captured if the American military effort continues.

The official who spoke to reporters said Foley's execution has not affected the scope of the American military campaign.

"There has been no change to the U.S. military mission in Iraq," according to the official.

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Rescue: Servicemember injured during mission to save hostages

FROM FRONT PAGE

"We had a combination of ... intelligence that was sufficient to enable us to act on it," the official continued, and the military moved "very aggressively, very quickly to try and recover our citizens."

The official said the effort "was not ultimately successful because the hostages were not present ... at the site of the operation." Other officials said they were believed to have been there, but that they had been moved up to several weeks before the raid.

In an announcement following the initial publication Wednesday of details about the operation, the White House and Pentagon issued statements confirming that President Barack Obama had authorized the mission following assessments that "these hostages were in danger with each passing day."

The Islamic State on Tuesday released a video of Foley's execution, which it said was in response to U.S. airstrikes in Iraq. Obama called the beheading "appalling" and "a brutal murder."

The failed operation "was conducted by a joint force with virtually every service represented," one of the senior officials said, including "special operators and aircraft both rotary and fixed wing," with surveillance aircraft overhead.

That official said that there were a "good number" of militant casualties at the site, but that one U.S. servicemember received a "minor injury when one aircraft did take some fire."

The two senior officials declined to specify the location of the raid, whether the hostages had ever been there, the specific U.S. units that had taken part in the operation or how long they were on the ground. "It wasn't an extraordinarily long period," one said.

In a statement Wednesday night, National Security Council spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said: "We never intended to disclose this operation. An overrid-

ing concern for the safety of the hostages and for operational security made it imperative that we preserve as much secrecy as possible. We only went public today when it was clear a number of media outlets were preparing to report on the operation and that we would have no choice but to acknowledge it."

Other current and former U.S. officials, who were not part of the briefing, said that Foley and others were held at an eastern Syria site near Raqqa, a city that is held by Islamic State fighters.

The officials said that U.S. forces landed modified, heavily armed Black Hawk helicopters flown by the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, which works with both the Army's Delta Force and Navy SEAL commandos. The regiment is known as the "Night Stalkers."

The current and former officials also said that unspecified materials belonging to the militants had been seized at the site of the raid.

Obama said Wednesday that the United States "will be vigilant and we will be relentless" against the Islamic State group and would "do what's necessary to see that justice is done" to Foley's killers.

The U.S. Central Command said it had carried out 14 airstrikes in northern Iraq near the Mosul Dam on Wednesday, following Foley's execution. Obama authorized the airstrikes to aid Iraqi and Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State, to help rescue besieged civilians, and to protect U.S. personnel and facilities in Iraq.

Since early June, Obama has sent about 800 U.S. troops to Iraq to assist in those missions.

On Wednesday, the State Department requested an additional 300 to help protect the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and a consulate in Irbil, the capital of the northern Kurdish region.

A White House spokesman said no decision had been made on the request.

Foley, 40, was kidnapped in

November 2012 while covering Syria's civil war. According to his employer, the Boston-based website GlobalPost, he was held in eastern Syria with at least a dozen other captives, including other Western journalists, by British members of the Islamic State, which last week sent his family and employer an email threatening to kill him.

"We knew exactly where he was from the released hostages," GlobalPost president and chief executive Philip Balboni said. "We knew that his immediate

jailers were British jihadists."

"There was talk of paying a ransom," Balboni said. "I think the fact that others were released for money certainly gave us hope that a similar outcome could be effectuated for Jim."

U.S. policy has long been opposed to paying ransom for hostages, although a number of European governments and companies are believed to have paid for releases.

Six European journalists — two Spaniards and four French — believed to have been held by

the Islamic State were released last spring, although the circumstances of their freedom is not known.

In Britain on Wednesday, Prime Minister David Cameron cut short a family vacation and returned to London to chair emergency meetings on Iraq and Syria, amid indications that a British citizen was involved in Foley's killing.

In the video, his masked executioner speaks in English with what sounds like a British accent.

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NATION

Ferguson and 'unprecedented' tour for Guard

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

FERGUSON, Mo. — Humvees at the Burger King, smoke grenades in the street, police with assault rifles — just a few of the atypical sights in this small, troubled Midwestern town.

There's no Taliban, and protesters aren't planting IEDs. But military uniforms and weaponry used by police and the presence of the National Guard in a suburban confrontation zone seemed more appropriate to military outposts in Afghanistan than a suburb of St. Louis, with its leafy streets and Target Supercenter.

On Thursday, Gov. Jay Nixon ordered the National Guard to begin a "systematic withdrawal" from Ferguson. He didn't say how soon the withdrawal would be complete and presumably local police armed with Pentagon surplus weapons and battle rattle will remain.

On the eve of Nixon's order, soldiers in uniform stood guard in a Ferguson mall parking lot serving as a military and police command center.

Some were recently back from Afghanistan, surprised to be called to duty so close to home to help quell riots sparked by a white policeman fatally shooting an unarmed black teen. Shoppers looked on curiously as they strolled by, pushing shopping carts into the Target store.

"It's odd, but we swore to defend the country against enemies, foreign and domestic," said a Missouri National Guard sergeant, who declined to give his name because the Guard warned soldiers not to talk to the media.

Another Guardsman said he had served in Iraq "so it's weird to be called out here." He spoke before being interrupted by a public affairs officer, who told him he was not allowed to be interviewed.

As in Afghanistan, the military is working hard to manage the message. The Missouri National Guard denied Stars and Stripes an "embed," the term used for journalists covering military units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It's an unprecedented operation," said Missouri National Guard spokeswoman Maj. Tammy Spicer.

Managing the media

It all started with the shooting of Michael Brown. The circumstances remain murky, but his death sparked more than a week of protests, which morphed into violence with looting, a gas station being destroyed and police reporting heavy incoming gun fire Monday. While the chaos has mostly been contained in a half-

mile stretch of road, tensions remain high with no end in sight.

The shooting, the riots and the militarized police response in the St. Louis suburb of 21,000 have sparked a national debate about race and police tactics, prompting Attorney General Eric Holder to visit Wednesday.

Mike O'Connell, spokesman for the Missouri Department of Public Safety, said numbers of troops or police officers were not being released.

"We know people are watching," he said. "If we say we have 100 officers, they will send 100 protesters, etc."

As of press time, it appeared there were only a few dozen Guardsmen around the command center.

After a Missouri state trooper shouted at a Stars and Stripes reporter for taking photos in the parking lot command center, Spicer said the concern stemmed from threats to the post.

"They're worried people taking photos could be casting the place for an attack," she said in a statement that could have easily referred to a base in Afghanistan preparing for an insurgent assault.

Limited mission

The American Civil Liberties Union and others have sharply criticized the state of emergency declared by Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, which suspends certain constitutional rights, and the call-up of the National Guard.

Nixon called it necessary "to protect the citizens of Ferguson."

"Given these deliberate, coordinated and intensifying violent attacks on lives and property in Ferguson, I am directing the highly capable men and women of the Missouri National Guard to assist Colonel Ron Replogle and the Unified Command in restoring peace and order to this community," Nixon's statement said.

The soldiers have a very limited mission, at least for now. A statement said they are solely there to protect the command center, manned mostly by local and state police who so far are more heavily armed than the troops.

At night, when the protesters have come out in force, the police have shown up in helmets and heavy bulletproof vests more reminiscent of soldiers. Many carried automatic rifles and stood by heavily armored vehicles.

'Intimidation tactics'

Residents of Ferguson have mixed feelings about the presence of uniformed troops, and many expressed dismay at police using



Heath Druzin/Stars and Stripes

Missouri National Guard soldiers watch the entrance to a mall parking lot that has turned into a police and military command center in Ferguson, Mo. Thursday afternoon, Gov. Jay Nixon ordered the Missouri National Guard to start withdrawing from Ferguson.

Holder shares personal experiences

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — To reassure the people of Ferguson, Attorney General Eric Holder reached into his own past, recalling the times he had been stopped by police officers who seemed to target him because of his race.

On a visit to the St. Louis suburb that has endured more than a week of unrest, Holder sought to build confidence in the investigation into the death of the black 18-year-old who was shot by a white officer. The trip also underscored the priority to the Obama administration of civil rights in general and the Michael Brown case in particular.

The attorney general said Wednesday that he understands why many black Americans do not trust police and that he has experienced many of the same frustrations. He described being stopped twice on the New Jersey Turnpike and accused of speeding. Police searched his car, looking through the trunk and under the seats.

"Remember how humiliating that was and how angry I was and the impact it had on me," Holder said during a meeting with about 50 community leaders at the Florissant campus of St. Louis Community College.

Once while living in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, Holder was run-

ning to catch a movie with his cousin when a squad car rolled up and flashed its lights at the pair. The officer yelled, "Where are you going? Hold it!" Holder recalled.

His cousin "started mouthing off," and Holder urged him to be quiet. "We negotiate the whole thing, and we walk to our movie. At the time that he stopped me, I was a federal prosecutor. I wasn't a kid," he said.

Holder also met with federal officials investigating Brown's Aug. 9 death and with Brown's parents. Before getting briefed at the local FBI headquarters, he said he hoped the visit would "have a calming influence" on the area.

In addition, the attorney general met briefly with Missouri State Highway Patrol Capt. Ron Johnson, who has been in charge of security in Ferguson for nearly a week. The National Guard is also helping to keep the peace.

Asked whether he had confidence in the local investigation of the police officer, Johnson said Holder's presence "is a guarantee on my part."

In nearby Clayton, a grand jury began hearing evidence to determine whether the officer, Darren Wilson, should be charged in Brown's death. A spokesman for St. Louis County Prosecutor Bob McCulloch

protests.

A short drive from the protests, the Corner Coffee House seemed a world away, with guests quietly sipping coffee and reading the morning paper — plastered, of course, with coverage of the town.

Chris Shanahan was selling "I Love Ferg" T-shirts to raise money for a local charity and rebuild pride in his town. He said he was deeply upset at seeing soldiers roll into his community, but understood something had to be

done. "I almost cried but I don't think anyone had an answer," he said.

"How else do you resolve what has been going on?" Peering out at the protest zone, Ferguson resident Carmella Williams summed up the feelings of many around the country.

"Here in the United States? I couldn't believe it. I guess I didn't want to believe it."

Johnson said the Obama administration has been working to achieve change through the Justice Department's civil rights division.

"The same kid who got stopped on the New Jersey freeway is now the attorney general of the United States," he added. "This country is capable of change. But change doesn't happen by itself."

Twitter: @druzin, @druzin

MILITARY

Japan likely to expand support for US military

The Yomiuri Shinbun

TOKYO — The Japanese government will likely expand the Self-Defense Forces' support for U.S. forces to include the provision of arms and ammunition as well as airborne refueling to the U.S. military's fighter jets in the event of contingencies surrounding Japan but before Japan exercises its right to self-defense, The Yomiuri Shinbun has learned. That policy will be incorporated in an interim report the government is scheduled to issue next month on revisions to the Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation Guidelines, according to sources.

Current guidelines do not approve those support activities by the SDF. The revision — which reflects July's Cabinet approval of the government's views on security — will enable the SDF to give logistic support to U.S. forces in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula.

The law on contingencies in areas surrounding Japan, which was formulated based on the current guidelines, restricts the SDF to providing logistical support for U.S. forces only in rear areas. While the contingencies law allows the SDF to supply U.S. forces with water and fuel and offer medical treatment to the injured, it does not permit refueling and maintenance work for U.S. fighter jets preparing for combat, even in rear areas, for fear that

such support could be construed as being integrated with the use of force by the U.S. military.

Under its new views on security, which allow limited exercise of the right of collective self-defense, the government believes no problem would arise if SDF support activities are carried out in areas other than places where other countries are actually engaged in battle, the sources said. The government reportedly intends to review its current system of allowing support activities only in "rear areas" it would set up afar from battle zones.

In the scheduled revision of the guidelines, the Japanese and U.S. governments have been discussing whether to stipulate an expansion of SDF support activities for U.S. forces in areas where fighting is not taking place, according to the sources.

In the event of emergencies on the Korean Peninsula and other places, the government plans to enable the SDF to provide the U.S. military with arms and ammunition as well as airborne refueling to the U.S. military's fighter jets in addition to the provision of transportation and supplies in areas close to combat zones, the sources said.

By boosting support for U.S. forces, the government hopes to maintain the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance even though the U.S. government is cutting its defense budget.



Devon Doskey/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

The first F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter ever to land at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, arrived Sept. 13.

Restrictions delay F-35 software testing

By TONY CAPACIO
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Flight restrictions on Lockheed Martin's F-35 are hampering the Pentagon's ability to conduct the software tests the plane must pass before it can be declared combat-ready by next July, according to the Pentagon's weapons-testing office.

The start of rigorous in-flight testing on the initial software for the Marine Corps version of the fighter is already five months late, and may be further delayed by the flight restrictions imposed on the 20 test aircraft and 79 training jets after an engine fire on an Air Force F-35 on June 23.

"Many test points remain blocked or difficult to achieve because" of the flight restrictions, Jennifer Elzea, a spokeswoman for the Pentagon director of operational testing Michael Gilmore,

said in an emailed statement. "This may cause further delays in completing" testing of the software, she said.

The Defense Department initially grounded the entire fleet of 99 F-35s made by Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed after a fire in a plane at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida forced the pilot to abort a takeoff.

The directive was later eased to imposing a limit on airspeed and requiring an inspection of the engines, made by United Technologies Corp.'s Pratt & Whitney unit, after every three hours of flight. Last week, that was further relaxed to permit test aircraft to fly six hours between engine inspections when evaluating aerial refueling and weapons delivery capabilities, Elzea said.

The progress of the Marine Corps version, the most complex of the three models in the \$398.6

billion program, has drawn international attention. Britain and Italy have committed to buying the version, the F-35B, which is designed for short takeoffs and vertical landings on fields and aircraft carriers.

Software is crucial to delivering the promised capabilities of the F-35 and operating its navigation, communications and targeting systems. Each plane will have more than 8 million lines of code once deployed, more than any previous U.S. or allied jet.

The software for the Marine version of the F-35, known as 2B, is undergoing verification on test aircraft to confirm that it meets contract specifications. The second phase of more rigorous software testing has been scheduled to start in October, five months later than planned, according to a June 17 Pentagon software review that was required by Congress.

Lawyer says Bergdahl wants to attend college

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — An Army sergeant held as a prisoner of war in Afghanistan for five years wants to attend college once the investigation into how he was captured by the Taliban is finished, his attorney said Wednesday.

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is in "a holding pattern" doing administrative duties at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, according to attorney Eugene Fidell, a military justice expert who is also a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School.

But any discussion of where Bergdahl, 28, wants to attend school or what he wants to study

is "way ahead of the target," Fidell said.

Bergdahl was freed May 31 in exchange for five detainees at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, detention center. The move generated criticism amid allegations that Bergdahl was a deserter.

The Army initially said it would put out a report on the probe of Bergdahl's disappearance on Friday, 60 days after the investigation, Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Dahl, was assigned the case. But the Army has extended the time for completion of the report.

"It is possible that he will have to follow up on issues that may require additional witness interviews," the Army said in a statement Tuesday. "Army senior leaders have been advised of the status of the investigation, and Maj. Gen. Dahl expects to submit his report for review in September."



Bergdahl

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NATION

Health records attract efforts by hackers

By JASON MILLMAN
The Washington Post

The recent theft of 4.5 million medical records by Chinese hackers highlights one undeniable truth about health care data: It's valuable, and bad people want it.

In this latest incident, hackers reportedly stole personal data from Community Health Systems patients, including their Social Security numbers, which is an especially coveted piece of information if you want to steal someone's identity. Thankfully for the patients, medical data and credit card numbers apparently were not stolen.

The overall number of health care data breaches is striking. Since 2009, when tough federal mandates began requiring more thorough reporting of those breaches, the Department of Health and Human Services' database has tracked 944 major

incidents affecting personal information from about 30.1 million people. A majority of those records are tied to theft (17.4 million people), followed by data loss (7.2 million people) and unauthorized access (1.9 million people), according to a Washington Post analysis of HHS data.

These numbers don't include the Community Health Systems data breach.

There are also many more incidents of smaller-scale breaches. In 2012, for example, HHS received 21,194 reports of smaller breaches affecting 165,135 people, according to the department's most recent report to Congress. Similar numbers were reported in 2011. In all, data breaches cost the industry \$5.6 billion each year, estimates the Ponemon Institute, a security firm.

Health care data seems to be

increasingly targeted, accounting for 43 percent of major data breaches reported in 2013, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center. That's the first time the health care sector topped the group's annual list, and it's on the same pace for 2014, according to the nonprofit group. The ITRC says the recent jump in health care breaches could be the result of tougher reporting requirements.

A data breach doesn't necessarily mean a patient is at risk of identity theft — a reportable breach could occur when someone loses a laptop with patient data, or some patient records are tossed into a dumpster. However, a 2013 report from the Javelin security firm found that about 25 percent of people who received data breach notices of any kind (not just health care) eventually became victims of identity theft.

Attacks on health care fail in first election test

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Republicans seeking to unseat the Senate incumbent in North Carolina have cut in half the portion of their top issue ads citing the health care act, a sign that the party's favorite attack against Democrats is losing its punch.

The shift — also taking place in competitive states such as Arkansas and Louisiana — shows Republicans are easing off their strategy of criticizing Democrats over the Affordable Care Act now that many Americans are benefiting

from the law and the measure is unlikely to be repealed.

"The Republican Party is realizing you can't really hang your hat on it," said Andrew Taylor, a political science professor at North Carolina State University. "It just isn't the kind of issue it was."

The party had been counting on anti-health care sentiment to spur Republican turnout in its quest for a U.S. Senate majority, just as the issue did when the party took the House in 2010. This election is the first since the law was fully implemented.

Supreme Court puts Va. same-sex marriages on hold

By ROBERT BARNES
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday stopped Virginia officials from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, putting on hold a lower-court ruling that said the unions could start Thursday.

The court stayed a decision by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit, which on July 28 agreed with a district judge's ruling that Virginia's ban is unconstitutional. The same panel declined last week to delay its ruling.

The Supreme Court's action was expected. Its one-paragraph order came without notice dissent from any of the nine justices and was consistent with its decision granting a stay in Utah, another state where a ban was found unconstitutional.

The decision indicates that the high court wants additional lower courts to weigh in instead of giving what might be construed as implied approval of an unbroken string of federal court decisions striking down state bans on same-sex marriages.

Virginia clerks and clergy had been preparing for a stream of same-sex couples seeking marriage licenses. But the order brought an abrupt halt to those preparations, which included new state forms that substituted the word "spouses" for "bride and groom."

In Arlington County, Circuit Court Clerk Paul Ferguson had redeployed staff to help process licenses and set aside a jury room

for an overflow crowd. The group People of Faith for Equality in Virginia had lined up more than 50 clergy to be on hand at court-houses Thursday morning to officiate.

The Supreme Court stepped in after defenders of the law and Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, a Democrat, asked for a stay. Herring believes the law is unconstitutional and joined those challenging it, but he said it would be disruptive to allow marriages to begin before the Supreme Court decided the ultimate question of whether state bans violate the U.S. Constitution.

Herring said in a conference call with reporters that he knew the action was disappointing to same-sex couples, but that he was "going to fight as hard as I can" to get the Supreme Court to agree to decide the ultimate question of whether states bans violate the U.S. Constitution.

Challengers of the Virginia ban and supporters of the voter-approved measures restricting marriage to a man and a woman have asked the court to use Virginia as a test case to decide the issue.

In the order, the justices said only that the stay would remain in effect until they decided whether to take the Virginia case. If so, the stay would remain in place until the court rendered a final decision.

The court could consider as early as next month whether to accept the Virginia case, but there is no deadline for a decision.



AUSTIN ANTHONY, THE (BOWLING GREEN, KY.) DAILY NEWS/AP

Soggy stroll

A woman hurries through the rain Wednesday on Western Kentucky University's campus in Bowling Green, Ky.

Texas Gov. Perry enters not-guilty plea

By PAUL J. WEBER
AND WILL WEISSERT
The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Republican Texas Gov. Rick Perry has formally pleaded not guilty to criminal charges of leveraging his power to try to oust a Democratic district attorney convicted of drunken driving, according to court documents obtained Wednesday.

The potential 2016 presidential candidate entered his plea in a Travis County court filing. He also waived an arraignment that had been set for Friday.

The waiver was no surprise

given that Perry has signaled no intention of letting the felony charges interrupt a busy travel schedule to court Republican voters.

The governor has dismissed the case as a political ploy, laughing off concerns that it could be potentially unflattering as he strongly considers a second presidential run. Many top national conservatives are lining up to support him, including some potential future White House rivals.

Perry's plea was filed with the court late Tuesday, shortly after the longest-serving governor in

Texas history was fingerprinted and had his mug shot taken. He tweeted a picture of himself stopping for vanilla ice cream on the way back from his booking.

Perry was indicted last week on charges of coercion and official oppression for vetoing \$7.5 million for the state public integrity unit, which investigates wrongdoing by elected officials and is run by the Travis County district attorney's office. Perry threatened the veto if the county's Democratic district attorney, Rosemary Lehmberg, stayed in office after a drunken-driving conviction.

NATION



MELANIE KIMBLE-LAGO, WATERTOWN (N.Y.) DAILY TIMES/AP

New York State Police crime scene investigators look through documents at the home of suspected kidnappers Stephen Howells II and Nicole F. Vaisey in Hermon, N.Y., on Aug. 14.

Hearing set in Amish girls' kidnapping, sex abuse in NY

By MICHAEL VIRTANEN
The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — A woman accused along with her boyfriend of abducting two young Amish sisters from a farm stand and sexually abusing them is due in court for a preliminary hearing.

Nicole Vaisey, 25, was expected to be in court Thursday.

The couple from Hermon were arrested Aug. 15, accused of abducting the 7-year-old and 12-year-old sisters from the family's rural farm stand near the Canadian border. The sisters turned

up the next night at the door of a house 15 miles from their home.

St. Lawrence County District Attorney Mary Rain said last week that they were sexually abused and other charges are likely.

Vaisey's lawyer said she was the victim of an abusive relationship. "She was in a master-slave relationship," by boyfriend Stephen Howells Jr., 39, said attorney Bradford Riendeau. "I believe she's not as culpable as he is."

Howells waived his right to a preliminary hearing and his case will go straight to a grand jury.

There was no answer late Tuesday at the county public defender's office, which is representing Howells.

The couple are in jail without bail.

The Associated Press generally does not identify victims of sexual abuse and is not naming the girls.

St. Lawrence County Sheriff Kevin Wells said the couple were prowling for easy targets and may have planned to abduct other children. He said the girls were able to provide details to investigators about their time in captivity.

Poll: Backing for Common Core declining

By T. REES SHAPIRO
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A year ago, the term Common Core meant little to the American public. But today, a vast majority of people in the country are familiar with the nationwide educational standards and most of them oppose the initiative touted by the Obama administration, a new survey shows.

The results of an annual poll by Gallup and the Phi Delta Kappa educators' organization provide more evidence that support for the Common Core State Standards, originally adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia, has faded in recent years. The survey showed that those who opposed the standards thought that the Common Core will hurt teachers' ability to craft lessons that they think will be best for the students. The latest survey results echo findings from other polls on Common Core support.

"It's pretty apparent that the Common Core has become a polarizing term," said Terry Holliday, the education commissioner of Kentucky, which was among the first states to adopt the standards in 2010.

The wide-ranging survey also showed that trust in the nation's public school system has evaporated, as a consistent majority of Americans approve of charter

schools that operate independently of state regulations.

Overall, more than 70 percent of Americans give President Barack Obama a C, D or F grade in his support to public schools, the lowest rating he has received on the poll since he took office in 2009.

Survey participants said that the top issue facing public schools is a lack of financial support, while concern about discipline issues or crime in schools is dropping.

Respondents also said that they placed more trust in their local school boards when it comes to educational policy issues than they trust the federal government. The survey showed the Obama administration influence waning as many Americans believe that the federal government should play a smaller role in public education.

On average, respondents said they thought highly of their neighborhood schools. But the poll showed that nearly 80 percent of Americans disapprove of the nation's public schools at large.

The poll also showed that 68 percent of public school parents believed that standardized tests are not helpful for teachers measuring student achievement.

The poll also showed overwhelming support for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams and college entrance tests such as the SAT and the ACT.

Mystery pair in selfies sought after burglary

The Associated Press

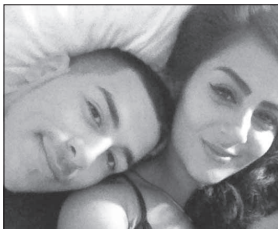
SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — Would burglars be dumb enough to post selfies on their victim's cloud account?

That's what Los Angeles County Sheriff's investigators are trying to determine.

Detectives on Wednesday released photos of a man and a woman that mysteriously appeared on a Santa Clarita woman's online account days after thieves broke into her home through a window and ransacked the place.

The crooks stole cash and either her cellphone or tablet, Deputy Joshua Dubin said.

The photos, apparently taken with the stolen device, were uploaded to the woman's account after the July 30 break-in, he said. They show a smiling man with short, dark hair, a smiling woman with longer, brownish hair, thickly painted eyebrows and heavy mascara, and a shot of the two together posing on a pillow.



COURTESY OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT/AP
Two people appear in an undated selfie portrait found on the cloud account of a Southern California burglary victim.

The victim doesn't know the pair, who are considered "persons of interest," and investigators want to talk to them, Dubin said.

"Did they buy stolen property? I don't know. Or are they the residential burglary suspects?" Dubin said. "There needs to be an explanation as to why their selfies are showing up on this person's cloud account."

Last 4 hostages freed in suburban Chicago standoff

The Associated Press

HARVEY, Ill. — About two dozen heavily armed law enforcement officers stormed a home in Chicago's southern suburbs

Wednesday to free four remaining hostages and captured two suspects, ending a 20-hour standoff that police say began as a robbery attempt.

Two women and two children were freed from morning from the home in the small city of Harvey, with the captors at one point firing through a second-floor door as officers rushed toward it down a hallway, said Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart.

Footage shot by a TV news helicopter showed officers with body armor, shields and rifles rushing toward the home from two directions and sweeping in through the front door as other officers aimed weapons and took cover near two large armored vehicles parked

out front.

Four children had been freed overnight after hours of talks and the hostage-takers were given cigarettes in exchange, Dart said.

The decision to send armed officers in came after nearly continuous negotiations, during which the hostage-takers intermittently issued threats, saying "they were going to kill the kids ... to kill everybody," the sheriff told The Associated Press in a phone interview late Wednesday. "It was a roller-coaster ride," said Dart, who had been on the scene during the all-night talks. "It went from idle chatter to threats, then back to idle chatter to threats again."

The shots through the door missed officers running up stairs and down the hallway, and officers immediately broke through the door and managed to subdue the hostage-takers, Dart said.

WORLD

Israeli airstrike kills 3 senior Hamas leaders

By IBRAHIM BARZAK
AND PETER ENAY
The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — An Israeli airstrike in Gaza killed three senior Hamas military commanders Thursday, delivering a likely blow to the organization's morale and highlighting the long reach of Israel's intelligence services.

The strike marked a further escalation in fighting after Egyptian efforts to end the war collapsed earlier this week, and signaled no end in sight for violence that has killed more than 2,000 Palestinians and 67 Israelis.

The pre-dawn strike leveled a four-story house in a densely populated neighborhood of the southern town of Rafah, killing six people, including the three senior Hamas commanders.

Israel said the trio had played a key role in expanding Hamas' military capabilities in recent years, including digging attack tunnels leading to Israel, training fighters and smuggling weapons to Gaza.

Thousands of Palestinians marched through Rafah in a funeral procession Thursday afternoon firing guns, waving flags of different militant groups and chanting religious slogans. Those killed were carried aloft through the crowd on stretchers, wrapped

in green Hamas flags.

Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman, said Israel "will not succeed in breaking the will of our people or weaken the resistance," and that Israel "will pay the price."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the "superior intelligence" of the Shin Bet security service and the military's "precise execution" of the attack.

An Israeli defense official said that tens of thousands of reserve soldiers would be called up for duty later Thursday. The official spoke anonymously as he is not allowed to brief the media. About 2,000 reservists who were sent home about two weeks ago, when the violence appeared to have subsided, were called back for service on Wednesday.

The killing of the three Hamas commanders will likely buy Netanyahu some time as the Israeli public becomes increasingly impatient with the government's inability to halt rocket fire from Gaza.

Gaza police and witnesses said several missiles hit the four-story building. Israel and Hamas identified the three commanders killed in the 3 a.m. airstrike as Mohammed Abu Shanab, Raed Attar and Mohammed Barhoum.

In pinpointing the whereabouts of the Hamas commanders, Isra-



KHALIL HAMRA/AP

A Palestinian man chants angry slogans as rescue workers search for victims under the rubble of a house destroyed in Israeli strikes in the Rafah refugee camp, Southern Gaza Strip, on Thursday. Three senior Hamas military commander were reported killed in the strike.

el likely relied to some extent on local informers. Israel has maintained a network of informers despite its withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, in some cases using blackmail or the lure of exit permits to win cooperation.

Al Majd, a website linked to the Hamas security services, said Thursday that seven suspected informers were arrested in recent days and that three were killed "after the completion of the revolutionary procedures against them."

It was the second time during the Gaza war that the website announced suspected informers had been killed by Hamas.

The Rafah attack came a day after an apparent Israeli attempt to kill the top Hamas military leader, Mohammed Deif, in an airstrike on a house in Gaza City. Deif's wife and an infant son were killed in that strike, but the on Hamas military wing said Deif was not in the targeted home at the time.

The body of his daughter, 5-year-old Sara Deif, was recovered from underneath the rubble on Thursday, the Gaza Health Ministry said.

The back-to-back targeting of top Hamas military leaders came after indirect Israel-Hamas negotiations in Cairo on a sustainable

truce broke down Tuesday. Gaza militants resumed rocket fire on Israel, even before the formal end of a six-day truce.

Since then, Gaza militants have fired dozens more rockets, and Israeli aircraft have struck dozens of targets in Gaza, dimming prospects for a resumption of the talks.

For now, the sides are sticking to unbridgeable demands. Hamas is demanding an end to an Israeli-Egypt blockade of Gaza. Israel, unwilling to grant Hamas any major concession it could claim as a victory in the six-week war, is demanding that Hamas disarm

Ukraine fight rages as convoy advances

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Parts of eastern Ukraine were wracked by fierce fighting Thursday as government troops sought to snatch back territory from separatist rebels, while a Russian aid convoy to the hard-hit city of Luhansk began to make tentative steps toward its destination.

Russia has been trying to send in more than 200 trucks carrying what it says is humanitarian aid to help civilians in Luhansk, but Ukraine fears the move is a ploy to aid the pro-Russian separatists.

The convoy has been held up at the border for a week in a dispute over the conditions under which Ukraine will let in the Russian trucks.

Ukraine has accused Russia of arming and supporting the separatists since fighting began in mid-April, which Russia denies.

Some Russian aid trucks began the process of clearing customs at the Russian border next to a rebel-held border post in eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian border guard service said.

Ukrainian troops have made significant advances into rebel-held territory this



SENTER GENTS/AP

People draw up documents for border crossing at a border control point with Ukraine in the Russian town of Donetsk, Rostov-on-Don region, Russia, on Thursday as fighting in Ukraine continues.

week in a conflict that has already claimed more than 2,000 lives and forced more than 340,000 people to flee their homes.

Fighting was still reported Thursday in Luhansk, a day after the government said it had captured much of the rebel stronghold 12 miles from the Russian border, Andriy

Lysenko, spokesman for the Ukrainian National Security Council, said in Kiev.

Meanwhile, five troops were killed and two civilians died in the past 24 hours in rebel-held areas, authorities said. That followed more than 50 deaths in the region Wednesday.

Russia targets McDonald's

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian news agencies reported Thursday that the country's food safety agency will conduct checks on McDonald's restaurants in the Urals following food safety complaints, a day after four branches of the chain were shuttered in Moscow.

Natalya Lukyantseva, an official in the Sverdlovsk regional office of the agency, told RIA Novosti and Interfax that unplanned checks were being carried out in a number of restaurants after residents voiced safety concerns.

The inspections came one day after the agency, known in Russian as Rosпотребнадзор, ordered four Moscow-based restaurants to suspend operations, citing "numerous" sanitary law breaches.

One of those restaurants, on Moscow's central Pushkin Square, was the first to open in the Soviet Union in 1990, drawing crowds of thousands that circled around the block.

INDEPENDENT NEWS FOR THE U.S. MILITARY COMMUNITY

Whenever They Fight and Wherever They Live

The first Stars and Stripes was printed during the Civil War, when a band of Union soldiers published a handful of editions.

During World War I, Stars and Stripes reappeared in Paris on February 8, 1918, to serve the doughboys of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), by order of General of the Armies John J. Pershing. An all-military staff produced it weekly until the war's end.

A second renaissance began on April 18, 1942, when a small group of servicemen began publishing a four-page weekly Stars and Stripes in London. They sold each copy for "tuppence" (about 5 cents) and in no time doubled their page count to eight pages, printing daily instead of weekly.

The first World War II edition of Stars and Stripes featured an interview with Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff. Marshall quoted Gen. Pershing, World War I Commander of the AEF, who described Stripes as a major factor in sustaining morale. Stars and Stripes later found a champion and protector in Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander and later president of the United States.

Eisenhower enforced a hands-off policy in regard to Stars and Stripes that continues to the present day.

Operations expanded, following GIs to the battlefield to bring them the news. During the war, Stars and Stripes published over 30

separate editions, running up to 24 pages per issue.

At one time, Stars and Stripes had some 25 printing locations in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. The Pacific edition was launched a week after VE day (Victory in Europe, May 8, 1945).

The war ended—but Stars and Stripes kept going. Its reporters and photographers continued to join American troops in the field, throughout the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, during the 1990s Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and in Bosnia and Kosovo.

From the 2003 outset of Operation Enduring Freedom, Stars and Stripes was there to report first-hand. The war in Afghanistan continues to receive steady coverage. And during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Stripes reporters embedded with military units in Kuwait and Iraq, as well as on Navy ships in the region.

Stars and Stripes today is a multimedia news organization. The majority of Stars and Stripes unique reporting efforts is read now in digital form, either online at stars.com or via mobile offerings for iPhone, Android and iPad, in over 200 countries around the world.

The print newspaper is still available for servicemembers, government civilians and their families in



Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific—and in contingency areas. Washington, D.C., hosts the Central office, where daily editions are transmitted to printers in Afghanistan, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Djibouti, as well as in Germany, Italy, UK, Japan, and South Korea. Stars and Stripes also publishes several weeklies (Stripes Guam, Japan, Korea and Okinawa), designed to serve the

needs of their respective military communities.

A U.S. edition comprised exclusively of Stars and Stripes reports from around the world now serves stateside forces and veterans. The U.S. edition is published in partnership with commercial newspaper publishers who serve communities with large military populations.

STARS AND STRIPES RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

2013 VFW News Media Award – For outstanding contribution to a better understanding of our American way of life and its institutions and interests by honest and forthright reporting.

2013 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Notable Narrative Winner Recipient: Laura Rauch

2013 Best American Newspaper Narrative Writing Contest – Notable Narrative Winner Recipient: Martin Kuz: "Soldiers Recount Attack"

2013 National Headline Awards – Second Place: News Series (Forever After: A Warrior Wounded: A Family Challenged)

2013 min Best of Web: Redesign – Honorable Mention Recipient: Stripes UK website

2011 Military Photographer of the Year – Honorable Mention Recipient: Joshua DeMotts

2011 Sigma Delta Chi Award – Breaking News Photography (Newspaper Circulation 100,001+ or Affiliated Website/National Magazine) Recipient: Laura Rauch: "For those I love I will sacrifice"

2011 John Reagan "Tex" McCrary Award for Excellence in Journalism – Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation

2010 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation) Recipient: Jon Rabiuff

2010 National Headline Awards – First Place: Public Service (Forcing Change) – Third Place: News Series (Coming Home: The Men of Triple Deuce)

2009 George Polk Awards in Journalism – George Polk Award for Military Reporting Recipient: Charlie Reed, Leo Shane III and Kevin Baron

2009 min Editorial & Design Awards – Editorial Print / Special Supplement: HEROES 2009; Custom Publication Design: Stripes GAMER

2007 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation) Recipient: Monte Morris

2006 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation) Recipients: Monte Morris, Joe Giordano; Honorable mention: Nancy Montgomery Photography: Fred Zimmerman

2005 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation) Recipient: Steve Lewis Photography: Terry Boyd

2004 American Legion Excellence in Journalism Award – Ground Truth Series

2003 Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Award – First Amendment's First

Liberian slum calm day after clashes

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEE
The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Calm returned Thursday to the slum of West Point in Liberia's capital that was sealed off in the government's desperate attempt to halt the spread of Ebola, a day after clashes erupted between residents and troops and police who were enforcing the quarantine.

Three Liberians currently receiving ZMapp, an experimental and unproven treatment for Ebola, in Liberia — the first and so far only Africans to get the drug — were showing "very positive signs of recovery," Liberia's information ministry said earlier this week. A Spaniard who had contracted Ebola and also received the treatment died. The drug supply is now exhausted, the U.S. manufacturer has said.

Officials from the World Health Organization were visiting two hospitals in Monrovia on Thursday that are treating Ebola patients. The two treatment centers are struggling to keep up with the influx of patients. Liberia is being hit especially hard by the dreaded virus that has killed more than 1,300 people in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria.



ABRIS DILLON/AP

Women from West Point carry water for sale Thursday in Monrovia, Liberia. Calm returned to West Point on Thursday, a day after clashes erupted between residents and security forces over the government's quarantine of the town in an effort to stop the spread of Ebola.

A nationwide nighttime curfew, first imposed countryside in Liberia on Wednesday night, appeared to have been put in place without major incident.

The current outbreak in West Africa is the largest ever, and officials have said that treatment centers, especially in Liberia, are filling up faster than new ones can be opened or expanded. That leaves the sick packing hallways, potentially infecting more people.

Ebola is transmitted by direct contact with the bodily fluids of someone who is sick and showing symptoms. To stop its spread, experts say, the sick should be isolated and not have any contact with the healthy.

Overcrowded treatment centers, a reluctance on the part of sick people to seek medical care and burial practices that involve touching the dead have helped fuel the disease's spread in West Africa.

With at least 2,473 people sickened, this outbreak now has more recorded cases than in the previous two-dozen outbreaks combined.

Several counties and districts in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been cordoned off, and there are concerns this is slowing the supply of food and other goods to these areas. The World Food Program is preparing to feed 1 million people affected by such travel restrictions.

Many residents of West Point, located on a peninsula in the seaside capital, are fearful they'll be cut off from food since many market traders are stuck behind the barricades. Food prices were already rising Wednesday.

Several airlines have also suspended flights to the affected countries, despite the World Health Organization's advice that Ebola is unlikely to spread through air travel. Guinea's president, Alpha Conde, met airline representatives and foreign diplomats on Wednesday to reassure them that Guinea is screening passengers leaving the country for fever and other symptoms, in line with WHO recommendations.

American aid worker set for release from Ga. hospital

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — At least one of the two American aid workers infected with the Ebola virus in Africa is set to be discharged Thursday from an Atlanta hospital, the aid group he was working for said.

Alison Geist, a spokeswoman for Samaritan's Purse, confirmed Dr. Kent Brantly would be released Thursday but could not say what time.



Brantly

Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse, said in a statement that Brantly has recovered.

"Today I join all of our Samaritan's Purse team around the world in giving thanks to God as we celebrate Dr. Kent Brantly's recovery from Ebola and release from the hospital," Graham's statement said.

Brantly and Nancy Writebol were flown out of the west African nation of Liberia earlier this month and have been getting treatment for the deadly disease in an isolation unit at the hospital.

The two were infected while working at a missionary clinic outside Liberia's capital.

ARCHIVE

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WORLD

Noodle lovers reject study

By FOSTER KLUG
AND JUNG-YOON CHOI
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Kim Min-ko has an easy reply to new American research that hits South Korea where it hurts—in the noodles. Drunk and hungry just after dawn, he rips the lid off a bowl of his beloved fast food, wobbling on his feet but still defiant over a report that links instant noodles to health hazards.

"There's no way any study is going to stop me from eating this," says Kim, his red face beaded with sweat as he adds hot water to his noodles in a Seoul convenience store. His mouth waters, wooden chopsticks poised above the softening strands, his glasses fogged by steam. At last, he spears a slippery heap, lets forth a mighty, noodle-cooling blast of air and starts slurping.

"This is the best moment — the first bite," Kim, a freelance film editor who indulges about five times a week, says between gulps. "The taste, the smell, the chewiness — it's just perfect."

Instant noodles carry a broke college student aura in America, but they are an essential, even passionate, part of life for many in South Korea and across Asia. Hence the emotional heartburn caused by a Baylor Heart and Vascular Hospital study in the United States that linked instant noodles consumption by South Koreans to some risks for heart disease.

The study has provoked feelings of wounded pride, mild guilt, stubborn resistance, even nationalism among South Koreans, who eat more instant noodles per capita than anyone in the world.

Many of those interviewed vowed, like Kim, not to quit. Other noodle lovers offered up techniques they swore kept them healthy: taking Omega-3, adding vegetables, using less seasoning, avoiding the soup. Some dismissed the study because the hospital in-



KOH SAKAKURA/AP

Japanese instant ramen noodle expert Masaya "Instant" Oyama, 55, slurps noodles at a shop and restaurant specializing only in varieties of instant noodles in Tokyo. A recent health study from an American hospital has irritated many instant noodle lovers across Asia.

volved is based in cheeseburger-gobbling America.

The heated reaction is partly explained by the omnipresence here of instant noodles, which, for South Koreans, usually mean the spicy, salty "ramyeon" that costs less than a dollar a package.

Individually-wrapped, disposable bowls and cups are everywhere: Internet cafes, libraries, trains, ice-skating rinks.

Elderly South Koreans often feel deep nostalgia for instant noodles, which entered the local market in the 1960s as the country began clawing its way out of the poverty and destruction of the Korean War into what's now Asia's fourth-biggest economy. Many vividly remember their first taste of the once-exotic treat, and hard-drinking South Koreans consider instant noodles an ideal remedy for aching, alcohol-laden bellies and subsequent hangovers.

Some people won't leave the country without them, worried they'll have to eat inferior noodles abroad. What could be better at relieving homesickness than a salty shot of ramyeon?

Ko Dong-ryun, 36, an engineer from Seoul, fills half his luggage with instant noodles for international business travel, a lesson he learned after assuming on his first trip that three packages would suffice for six days. "Man, was I wrong. Since then, I always make sure I pack enough."

The U.S. study was based on South Korean surveys in 2007-09 of more than 10,700 adults ages 19-64, about half of them women. It found that people who ate a

diet rich in meat, soda and fried and fast foods, including instant noodles, were associated with an increase in abdominal obesity and LDL, or "bad," cholesterol. Eating instant noodles more than twice a week was associated with a higher prevalence of metabolic syndrome, another heart risk factor, in women but not in men.

The study raises important questions, but can't prove that instant noodles are to blame rather than the overall diets of people who eat lots of them, cautions Alice Lichtenstein, director of the cardiovascular nutrition lab at Tufts University in Boston.

"What's jumping out is the sodium [intake] is higher in those who are consuming ramen noodles," she said. "What we don't know is whether it's coming from the ramen noodles or what they are consuming with the ramen noodles."

There's certainly a lot of sodium in those little cups. A serving of the top-selling instant ramyeon provides more than 90 percent of South Korea's recommended daily sodium intake.

Still, it's tough to expect much nutrition from a meal that costs around 80 cents, said Choi Yongsmin, 44, marketing director for Paldo, a South Korean food company.

By value, instant noodles were the top-selling manufactured food in South Korea in 2012, the most recent year figures are available, with about \$1.8 billion worth sold, according to South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety.

China is the world's largest in-

stant noodle market, according to the World Instant Noodles Association, although its per capita consumption pales next to South Korea's. The food is often a low-end option for Chinese people short of money, time or cooking facilities.

Japan, considered the spiritual home of instant noodles, boasts a dazzling array.

Masaya "Instant" Oyama, 55, who said he eats more than 400 packages of instant noodles a year, rattled off a sampling: Hello Kitty instant noodles, polar bear instant noodles developed by a zoo, black squid ink instant noodles.

In South Korea, it's all about speed, cost and flavor.

Thousands of convenience stores have corners devoted to noodles: Tear off the top, add hot water from a dispenser, wait a couple minutes and it's ready to eat, often at a nearby counter.

Some even skip the water, pounding on the package to break up the dry noodles, adding the seasoning, then shaking everything up. "It's toasty, chewy, much better than most other snacks out there," Byon Sarah, 28, who owns a consulting company, said of a technique she discovered in middle school.

At the comic book store she runs in Seoul, Lim Eun-jung, 42, said she noticed a lot more belly fat about six months after she installed a fast-cooking instant noodle machine for customers.

"It's obvious that it's not good for my body," Lim said. "But I'm lazy, and ramyeon is the perfect fast food for lazy people."

Hazelnut shortage is bad news for Nutella lovers

By ROBERTO A. FERDMAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — There's bad news for fans of Nutella, the chocolaty hazelnut spread. Poor weather in Turkey, the world's largest producer of hazelnuts, is causing a major shortage of the nuts. The Turkish industry, which is responsible for growing some 70 percent of the world's hazelnuts — is facing what could be a hazelnut crop that's more than 30 percent below original expectations, according to the Guardian.

As a result, the price of hazelnuts has spiked by more than 60 percent so far this year and more than doubled since last fall.

While rising hazelnut prices are likely to prove a nuisance for a number of global chocolate-makers, the most vulnerable appears to be Nutella-maker Ferrero group. That's because Ferrero now buys as much as a quarter of the world's hazelnuts, and relies heavily on Turkey to supply the 50 hazelnuts it takes to produce each 13 ounce jar of Nutella.

Nutella's global value chain, which the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development mapped out last year, spans the globe. Ferrero is headquartered in Italy, but has factories on several continents, and sources its ingredients from several others. The hazelnuts are from Turkey, but the palm oil comes from Malaysia, and the cocoa from Nigeria.

The good news for Nutella lovers is that Ferrero acquired Turkish company Oltan Group, a leading manufacturer of Turkish hazelnuts. Having its hand in the cookie jar, so to speak, allows Ferrero to protect itself somewhat from market pressures, like the current hazelnut shortage.

The bad news is that the odds appear to be stacking up against the world's favorite hazelnut spread. Hazelnut prices aren't the only Nutella ingredient whose cost is on the rise. Palm oil, which is roughly 20 percent of the spread, has also been getting more expensive on the heels of rising demand and weather-dampened supply. So has cocoa, another key ingredient — cocoa prices are up by more than 40 percent since last year.

None of that means a shortage of Nutella, but if the circumstances in Turkey, Nigeria and Southeast Asia persist, don't be surprised if the 250,000 tons of Nutella Ferrero sells in more than 75 countries this year will start carrying a slightly higher sticker price.

STRIPES CENTRAL

WISDOM IS POWER.

ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY

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OMBUDESMAN

FAITH

Burgers and Bible verses



(BARBARA DAVIDSON, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT)

Students eat burgers and mingle at the Jesus Burgers house in May in Santa Barbara, Calif. A group of college-aged Christians put on a monthly worship night at the house in the Isla Vista neighborhood, and afterward they give out free burgers.

Group offers place to gather, share the word in California town known for partying

By ADOLFO FLORES
Los Angeles Times

ISLA VISTA, Calif. — Angela Boyd bounced on the balls of her feet as the smell of sizzling meat pierced the ocean breeze. The 19-year-old and her friends were about to celebrate her birthday in Isla Vista, but they were making a pit stop at the Jesus Burgers house.

Music, laughter and clinking shot glasses coming from nearby apartments on Del Playa Drive announced another Friday night in Isla Vista, the hard-partying neighborhood next to UC Santa Barbara.

But at this apartment, students were throwing burgers on the grill for a higher purpose: It was time for some missionary work.

Christina Perez, 24, a graduate of UCSB and member of Isla Vista Church, which does out the free burgers, walked up to Boyd and began a casual conversation about anything but church — birthday plans, how she was getting home.

Boyd humored her. She knew what Perez was after.

"I see it in your eyes," Boyd said. "And I want to go to church."

"We have one at 4 on Sunday," Perez said.

Behind them a group of students spilled out of an apartment across the street, "Turn Down for What" blasting through the windows.

The two exchanged numbers and promised to text each other. Then Boyd joined the flow of college students out for a night on the town.

Across the street, Jason Lomelino watched as a man sketched "Jesus wept" in large letters on the middle of the street using orange and blue chalk. The verse, known for being the shortest in the Bible, had sprung up on streets and sidewalks in May after a rampage by Elliot Rodger left seven people dead, including the killer.

Even though residents of Isla Vista make up only about 7 percent of the county's population, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office said nearly a quarter of all serious and violent crime in the region occurs there.

"People are hurting, and what we see is a manifestation of that in excessive partying, drugs and sex," said Lomelino, the pastor of Isla Vista Church. "There's a darkness to this place. Sometimes it can escalate into things of this nature."

For years, his church has preached the word of God to revelers. He knows it's a tall order in an area famous for its drinking, drug use and promiscuity.

With his deep tan and dark blue hoodie over his buzzed hair, the 34-year-old looks more like a surfer than a pastor. He sees a lot of his former self in the young partiers of Isla Vista.

'Nobody is saying, 'Burn or turn.''

Ava Ames
church member

He moved to Santa Barbara in 2001 from San Diego to get away from his partying ways, though he continued to hang out in Isla Vista.

One night, a group of friends took him to a Friday night church service at Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara. As he prayed, Lomelino heard a voice he believed was God's.

"Jason, what are you living for?" the voice said.

"It was the first time I knew God was real," Lomelino said.

Soon Lomelino, with the help of a group of other college-age Christians, put on a monthly worship night at a park in downtown Isla Vista. They started giving out free burgers. A group of them would walk down Del Playa Drive on Friday nights to talk to students about Jesus, Lomelino said. Even though some students were receptive, they were often heckled.

"Why are you here?" and expletives were commonly thrown at them, Lomelino said.

In 2002 they leased the building they occupy now, dubbed the Jesus Burgers house by students, where members of the church live. The nondenominational

church was founded that same year, the first service held in the front yard of the apartment.

Lomelino, who took over as senior pastor in 2007, also works as a personal assistant for a Santa Barbara man who owns a carpet company.

When classes are in session, Lomelino encourages his congregation of about 150 people to look at themselves as missionaries in Isla Vista.

The median age of Isla Vista's 24,500 residents is about 21, according to census figures. The unincorporated 1.9-square-mile area is home mostly to UC Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara City College students, many living in cramped apartments.

This month, the campus placed third in an annual ranking of top party schools.

The legions of bronzed students riding beach cruisers and longboards in tank tops and sandals look as though they're living a laid-back life. But Ava Ames, 23, a UCSB graduate with a big voice, said many of them are under a great deal of pressure.

Students struggle to maintain a high grade-point average while partying into the late hours in an

effort to fit in and chase the next high, she said.

"If you're not partying, you don't fit into the scene and you fade into the background," Ames said. "A lot of these kids can't balance it, and they spiral into drug use, depression and, for many girls, eating disorders."

Ames can relate. As a freshman, she dated a fraternity member and drank heavily. At the same time, she said, she struggled with depression and anxiety.

One drunken night, Ames and her then-boyfriend were escorted to the Jesus Burgers house by a persistent member of the church. Once inside, two students "prayed on" the pair, Ames said. She was shocked when they started to say things about her life she'd never shared publicly.

But she didn't make a beeline for the next Isla Vista Church service. A year later, her younger brother asked if she would babysit Lomelino's kids during a service. She agreed.

The singing drew her in, Ames said, and before she knew it she was crying in a pew. She's been a member of the church ever since. Even though most students at UCSB or Santa Barbara City College aren't fighting for a pew seat, Ames said, many of them respect the Jesus Burgers house and women know it's a safe place to crash if they're too inebriated.

"Nobody is saying, 'Burn or turn,'" Ames said.

FACES

'I kind of feel like Rocky'

Busy country artist Trisha Yearwood releasing a new album

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

Once intent on scaling back her career to focus on family, country singer Trisha Yearwood now finds herself with two — platinum-selling musician with a new album on the way and emerging kitchen mogul.

"I kind of feel like Rocky in the first movie," Yearwood said.

An apt description: Yearwood announced Tuesday she's releasing a new album titled "Prizefighter." The title is taken from a new track she found inspiring as she contemplated relaunching her music career at 49. It coincides with the looming comeback tour with her husband, Garth Brooks.

She's also launching cookware and cutlery lines, begins a new season of "Trisha's Southern Kitchen" next week and has her third cookbook out next spring.

"I kind of feel like the odds are not in my favor, so the song is really motivating in that way because it's just kind of like you've got to fight, you've got to fight for what you want," Yearwood said.

She and Brooks begin their tour Sept. 4 in Chicago, where they'll play 11 concerts — "We call it the freak show right now" — and she will be taping new episodes of her show's fifth season between sets while on the road.

As the tour approached, she spent time in the studio tweaking her new album, which includes a hits package and six new songs. The music, she said, has been her priority amid all the other projects.

Trisha Yearwood announced Tuesday she's releasing new music — a hits package with six new songs called "Prizefighter." Also ahead for her: new cookware and cutlery lines, a new season of her TV show and another cookbook.

MARK HUMPHREY/AP

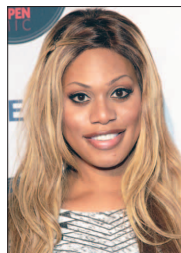


"I told the Food Network people, I love them, 'You guys are awesome, but I've got to finish my record. I've got to make some music,'" Yearwood said.

Brooks and Yearwood chose to mostly shutter their careers after they married in 2005 and moved to Oklahoma, where they raised Brooks' three daughters. Since then, Yearwood has sold 12 million albums but released very little music. The Grammy Award winner's last album came out in 2007 and plans since were set aside when her mother was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer.

She said she found things too quiet without music, though, and hopes the new music will empower young women, just as several other recent songs by female artists have done.

"I love those songs that make girls put their hands in the air and say, 'Yeah, I can do that,'" she said. "Hopefully this song ('Prizefighter') will do that."



Laverne Cox

Cox hopes to inspire with her life story

By MESFIN FEKADU
The Associated Press

Laverne Cox realizes she is having a winning moment as a transgender actor in entertainment — including a recent Emmy nomination — and she hopes her story will continue to inspire others.

"It gives me hope that anything is possible. I'm a black trans woman from Alabama raised by a single mother from a working class background. And I think in a lot of ways, my story is what this country is about and should be about," Cox said in an interview Wednesday.

"There's a lot of strife going on in the world right now, particularly (for) the folks in Ferguson, Mo., sending love to them — that I think we need a sense of hope and possibility," she added. "We need a lot of love and I hope my story inspires people."

Cox is one of the stars of Netflix's "Orange Is the New Black," which recently debuted its second season.

The breakthrough show received 12 Primetime Emmy nominations, including outstanding comedy series. Winners will be announced Monday. The series won three honors at the creative arts Emmy ceremony last week, including best guest actress in a comedy series for Uzo Aduba, who beat Cox.

Cox said she is currently filming the third season, and revealed the plot about women behind bars thickens.

"I can't tell you who I had scenes with ... (but) the scene we shot today was juicy. I was like, 'Oh my god.' Stuff goes down," she said. "I'm so excited about this show and like, these women are killing it. I finished my scene and I waited and watched the monitor like, 'Oh! Oh! Werk!'"

Cox said she will have a role on the upcoming Bravo series "Girlfriend's Guide to Divorce," which premieres Dec. 2.

The former reality star says since the success of "Orange" she's getting more calls.

"There's some things on the horizon," she said. "There have been some wonderful offers."

Two-time 'Dancing with the Stars' champ returning to show as a judge

The Associated Press

"Dancing With the Stars" says two-time champion Julianne Hough is returning to the ballroom as a judge this season. She will preside alongside Len Goodman, Carrie Ann Inaba and Bruno Tonioli.

After serving as a company dancer-choreographer, Hough left the show in 2009 to focus on acting and music.

Her films include "Safe Haven," "Paradise," "Rock of Ages" and the 2011 remake of "Footloose." She released a best-selling album in 2008.

Other news

■ Billy Crystal will pay tribute to Robin Williams, his longtime friend and fellow comedian, at the Emmy Awards. Crystal will honor Williams as part of the traditional in memoriam segment for industry members

who died during the past year, Emmy executive producer Don Mischer said in a statement Wednesday.

■ A photographer sued Justin Bieber and one of his bodyguards Wednesday for assault and infliction of emotional distress over an altercation on Hawaiian beach last year. The lawsuit by paparazzo Aja Oxman states Bieber ordered his bodyguard to take a memory card after the photographer took photos of the pop singer leaping from a cliff into the ocean. Bodyguard Dwayne Patterson placed Oxman in a chokehold and seriously injured him and damaged his camera during the November incident, the lawsuit states.

■ Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey is the new spokesman for Ford's luxury Lincoln brand. Lincoln says McConaughey will appear in a series of TV and digital ads featuring Lincoln's new small SUV, the MKC. The actor says in a statement that he's a longtime admirer of Lincoln.

■ Roundabout Theatre Company said Wednesday Emma Stone will make her Broadway debut Nov. 11 as Sally Bowles in "Cabaret" at the Studio 54 theater in New York.

■ Amy Winehouse is to be commemorated with a statue in the London neighborhood where she lived and worked. The late singer's family says the statue will be unveiled in Camden Town on Sept. 14, her 31st birthday.



Julianne Hough

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Wanted man involved in accident with police car

WA SPOKANE — Authorities said a wanted man was arrested after he rear-ended a Spokane detective's car.

Police said the man's car crashed into the detective's car Tuesday, and police discovered he was wanted on outstanding arrest warrants related to driving and domestic violence.

KREM reported the detective was treated for minor injuries.

Topless rally heading to new location

NC ASHEVILLE, — A topless rally is moving to a new location in Asheville this year that some say will be more visible to tourists and visitors.

The rally is set for Sunday at Pritchard Park in the downtown retail and dining area, the Asheville Citizen-Times reported. The previous location at another park was already reserved for another event.

Asheville rally spokeswoman LaDonna Allison said the event is designed to promote women's equality. Her group says laws and social stigmas against women being topless in public are unfair.

"What reason do they have for saying it's OK for a man but not for a woman?" Allison said. "I just want to be treated equally."

The rallies have seen a decline in the number of participants and spectators. The first event in 2011 drew an estimated 2,000 people and several dozen topless women. The 2012 and 2013 events drew several hundred people, with about a dozen women baring their breasts.

Woman digs up father's grave looking for will

NH LANCASTER — A woman accused of ransacking the New Hampshire grave of her father in search of his "real will" is asking a judge to dismiss the charge, arguing the body was never destroyed or removed.

Eddie Nash, a businessman, died of a heart attack in 2004 at 68. His cement vault at the Colebrook Village Cemetery was opened and his remains searched through. The body was left intact.

Prosecutors allege Melanie Nash conspired with others to remove her father's remains. The Caledonian Record reported that in a motion filed earlier this month, her lawyer said the state doesn't allege the group destroyed Nash's corpse.

Naked biker arrested following accident

VA ARLINGTON — Arlington County police said a drunk, naked man crashed into two cars while riding a motorcycle before fleeing into some woods.

The crashes occurred Friday night in Arlington. Police said Roland Hitchens, 42, wasn't wearing any clothes when police

THE CENSUS

150

The percentage that New Jersey officials said a hotel increased its rates because of Superstorm Sandy. Amy Hotels agreed to pay nearly \$65,000 to settle allegations of price gouging. State officials claimed the company raised its room rates by as much as \$199.99 per night after Gov. Chris Christie declared a state of emergency in advance of Sandy making landfall in 2012.



AMELIA BRUST, THE (HARRISONBURG, VA.) DAILY NEWS-RECORD/AP

A bushel of repairs

Workers begin repairing the outside of the apple basket-themed water tower along Interstate 81 North in Mount Jackson, Va., on Tuesday. Repairs for the local landmark were put to bid in July after rust spots and faded paint were found inside and outside the tower.

found him close to the scene. He was taken to a hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. No one else was hurt.

Police announced Tuesday that Hitchens has been charged with felony hit-and-run, indecent exposure, driving under the influence and other offenses.

School faces lawsuit over iPad discrimination

MA MENDON — The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a complaint with Massachusetts' education officials over what it calls the discriminatory policy regarding iPad use at a state school district.

The ACLU says the Mendon-Upton School District allows only low-income middle school students who qualify for free or reduced price lunches to take school-provided iPads home with them, while the rest of the students can use the school iPads only in school, or must buy their own.

The Telegram & Gazette reported that the ACLU of Massachusetts says the policy violates

state law by not providing all students with equal access to educational resources.

Students hit by Ebola travel ban finally return

AL TUSKEGEE — Six Tuskegee University students are home after being stranded in Liberia for weeks because of the Ebola outbreak.

The school issued a statement Tuesday night saying the students arrived at the Atlanta airport. They are all healthy with no quarantine restrictions.

Most of the students went home with relatives since they missed the start of the fall semester. They're excused from classes for now. The school says the students will be monitored for three weeks when they return to campus to make sure they're not showing signs of illness.

The six students went to Africa as part of a summer program to study abroad. Their return to the United States was delayed because of travel restrictions linked to the outbreak of the deadly disease in West Africa.

Injuries help boxer get lighter sentence

CA OAKLAND, — A federal judge sentenced a former world champion boxer convicted of several bank robberies to seven years in prison, handing down a lighter sentence in part because of the defendant's boxing-related injuries, his difficult childhood and a mistake by a Georgia court in 2001 that resulted in his spending additional years in prison.

James Page was facing up to 20 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to the San Francisco Bay Area bank robberies in February. Prosecutors said Page, 43, who had been dubbed the "Butt-Down Bandit" because of the shirts he wore, took more than \$20,000 during the heists last year, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Page told U.S. District Court Judge Jeffrey White in Oakland he knows what he did was wrong.

"With the pressures of life out there and my ego, I decided to take things in my own hands and make poor choices. I made a

mistake, a mistake I take responsibility for," he said in court, according to the Oakland Tribune.

Shotgun-wielding man planned 'Biden defense'

WA VANCOUVER — A prosecutor says he'll dismiss a firearms charge because he doubts a jury would convict a Vancouver man who said he was following the advice of Vice President Joe Biden when he fired a shotgun in the air.

Jeffrey C. Barton had been scheduled for trial next week on the charge. The Columbian reported that Clark County Prosecutor Tony Goltik said Tuesday that Barton will face a charge of obstructing a police officer.

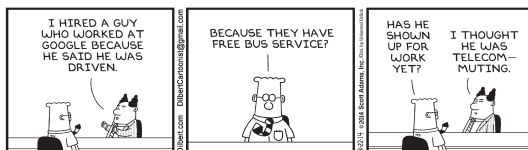
Barton admits firing the gun in July 2013 to chase away three men who appeared to be breaking into his vehicles. He planned the so-called "Biden defense," based on a statement the vice president made in February 2013 that people don't need automatic weapons because shooting a shotgun in the air would scare off intruders.

From wire reports

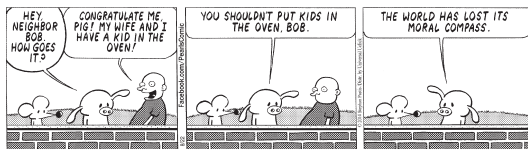
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearly Before Swine



Non Sequitur



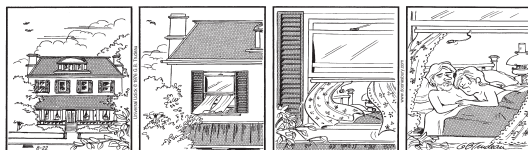
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



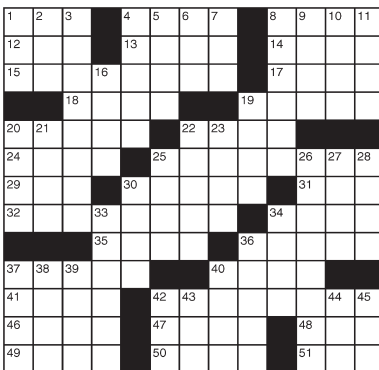
Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Wrigley wares
- 4 Fellow
- 8 Alkali neutralizer
- 12 Lennon's lady
- 13 Others, with "the"
- 14 Spiral-horned antelope
- 15 Melbourne's state
- 17 Capri, e.g.
- 18 "Arrivederci"
- 19 Urge
- 20 Empty
- 22 Amorphous mass
- 24 Uncomplicated
- 25 South African city
- 29 Enjoy Aspen
- 30 Spa amenity
- 31 Hem and —
- 32 Brain's receptors
- 34 Russian council
- 35 Give temporarily
- 36 Urban driver
- 37 Unadorned
- 40 Pop
- 41 Peal
- 42 Bliss
- 46 Swardword
- 47 Arctic predator
- 48 Morsel
- 49 Worry
- 50 Coastal flier
- 51 Video-game family name

DOWN

- 1 Head of st.
- 2 Sea urchin, at a sushi bar
- 3 Comfy shoe
- 4 Frog's noise
- 5 Medal earner
- 6 "— was saying ..."
- 7 Sch. org.
- 8 With hands on hips
- 9 Point
- 10 Not busy
- 11 Burr-Hamilton event
- 16 Wee
- 19 Greek vowel
- 20 Harry's first lady
- 21 Michigan, e.g. in a way
- 22 Bear
- 23 Dunham of "Girls"
- 25 Brazilian rubber
- 26 Heated disputes
- 27 Poetic foot
- 28 Vacationing
- 30 Anytime now
- 33 Unsubstantial
- 34 Pedestal part
- 36 "Yankee Doodle Dandy" subject
- 37 Campus VIP
- 38 Talletier
- 39 Initial stake
- 40 Boot attachment
- 42 Supperative suffix
- 43 Guitar's cousin
- 44 Midafternoon, in a way
- 45 \$ dispenser

Answer to Previous Puzzle



8-22

CRYPTOQUIP

N EANH S DHW VPX YAWH EAW
 L DOB LP ELA ENHSWI ZWGG,
 BAW OI DZPZGX YNGG ZW

RNHV V RDI UGNEEWINHU.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: Since you and I gave the toddler several instructions, I would say that we taught a wee tot.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals B

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OPINION

Terror group's threat only growing

By MARC CHAMPION
 Bloomberg News

The beheading of U.S. freelance photographer James Foley, now confirmed by U.S. officials, recalls the similarly gruesome murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002. It should act as a reminder, too, that the Islamic State began as al-Qaida in Iraq and differs from Pearl's killers only in tactics.

Both proclaimed killings of American journalists were acts of propaganda designed to shock. The leaders of Islamic State aren't naive enough to believe that Foley's death will persuade the U.S. to end its airstrikes against the group. No more did al-Qaida's self-described 9/11 architect Khalid Sheikh Mohammed expect the U.S. would meet the demand, made on the video recording in which he beheaded Pearl, to release all prisoners from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

It's especially chilling that Foley's purported executioner had a British accent — Pearl's kidnapper, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, was also a British national, radicalized while in Bosnia. At some point these people return home, unless killed or arrested. They will return brainwashed and brutalized.

Both al-Qaida and the Islamic State are best understood as nihilist organizations that target anyone who doesn't share their inchoate ideology, rooted in a warped interpretation of fundamentalist Sunni Islam: their enemies range from moderate Sunnis, to Shiites, Christians, Kurds, minority religious groups such as the Yazidi — and, of course, the West.

As ever, success is the best recruiter. Because, until recently, Syrian President Bashar Assad and the Islamic State left each other alone, focusing instead on taking territory from more moderate Sunni rebels in Syria, the Islamic State grew there. Now it has seized about a third of Iraq and, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, recruited 6,300 new fighters, about 1,300 of them foreign, in July alone. That raises their total to about 50,000 from 15,000 a year ago, the Observatory says.

That's a higher estimate than those of most Western analysts, but the trend is clear. Also important is that this membership boost occurred before the U.S. launched airstrikes, so it was not in response to Western involvement.

The Islamic State differs from al-Qaida in the priority it gives to building a caliphate at the heart of the Middle East, rather

than attacking the West. Yet this is a matter of priorities only: The ideology and methods are shared and when Islamic State fighters go home, it defies experience and logic to believe they won't continue the fight there — one returnee already attacked a synagogue in Belgium.

The question for President Barack Obama and other Western leaders isn't whether to fight the Islamic State, but when. Should it be now, when the group is not yet entrenched in Iraq, and when Assad — finally — has begun to move against it in Syria? Or will it be once its fighters have established themselves in Iraq and Syria and move on to Jordan, as they moved on the Kurds? If they were to succeed in Jordan, why not the Gulf states, where they already recruit and solicit donations? In Iraq and beyond, the nightmare prospect is of an al-Qaida that controls petro-states and enjoys the funds, space and leisure to train jihadists from around the world.

The tragic death of James Foley should not be seen as a signal to step back in the belief that this will curb our fight if we make it so. Foley's killing just confirms what the Islamic State is and what it intends.

Marc Champion writes editorials on international affairs for Bloomberg View.

Obama's response so far to Ferguson is apt

By CHARLES LANE
 The Washington Post

As the tumultuous situation in Ferguson, Mo., entered its second week, President Barack Obama stood before the nation and offered a mild, balanced plea.

There is "no excuse" for excessive use of deadly force by police, he observed at a Monday news conference; the family of Michael Brown, gunned down by a white officer under suspicious circumstances, deserves justice. But violent protests "undermine" that cause. Americans should "unite with each other and understand each other," "listen and not just shout."

If Obama's words were anodyne, his affect was somber and subdued. In a nation rolling with anger, fear and confusion, the president alone appeared unafraid.

To which I say: Good for him.

One thing that's in short supply in America right at the moment is emotional rhetoric. He airwaves and newspapers and Twitter feeds are thick with it, in case you haven't noticed. Therefore, it's not immediately clear what purpose would be served by presidential venting, especially in the midst of a bitter off-year election campaign, when his every word is bound to be politicized and polarized.

Others disagree. They want Obama to raise his voice, to speak from his heart and from his experience as an African-American, the first to occupy the White House.

MSNBC's Michael Eric Dyson, a professor at Georgetown University, reproaches the president for not using his "bully pulpit" to "tell us as a nation what happens when festering rage in a community then begins to ignite and then begins to consume not only that community but the people around the nation who are enemies of it."

Maureen Dowd of The New York Times says Obama has gone from "hot commodity to wet blanket" and demands to know why he won't "stop going to Beverly Hills to raise money and go to St. Louis to raise consciousness."

What distinguishes Obama from these critics, of course, is that he has actual responsibilities, of which the most pressing are to keep a highly dangerous situation



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIEVA/AP

Attorney General Eric Holder greets Bri Ehsan, 25, following his meeting with students at St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley in Ferguson, Mo., on Wednesday.

from getting any worse and to supervise an impartial investigation of the horrific event that led up to it. If he were to deliver the lecture Dyson recommends, or hold a consciousness-raising session whatever that is — in St. Louis, he might put both objectives at risk, as he succinctly explained Monday. Having assigned the Justice Department to look into the case, he said, "I've got to make sure that I don't look like I'm putting my thumb on the scales one way or the other."

Obama's swift mobilization of Justice was appropriate. Founded in 1870 for the purpose of protecting Southern blacks during Reconstruction, the department also played a crucial role in civil rights struggles during the 1960s.

Under Eric Holder, the department has stepped up civil rights enforcement generally and supervision of local police in particular. In terms of practical effect, putting DOJ on the case is worth 1,000 speeches.

By the way, if Obama's eloquence really did have the power to solve real-world problems, we might not be facing this sickening mess in Ferguson to begin with, given how often the president has addressed America's troubled race relations already.

You might say the same for the Middle East, where Obama's lofty verbal outreach to "the Muslim world" has given way to airstrikes against a monstrous Islamist insurgency in Iraq.

To some extent, Obama has himself to blame for the latest criticism of his leadership. He has encouraged magical thinking about his presidency — from the day he launched his candidacy on a vague promise of hope and change to his recent promises of "executive action" on a host of issues from immigration to taxes. Indeed, given that history, there is a certain poignancy in the pleas from his supporters for a dose of the old charisma now.

Uncharismatic though it may be, his response so far to Ferguson is perfectly presidential. In fact, his cautious rhetoric may be a sign that he is coming to a more seasoned understanding of the "bully pulpit" and its limitations.

When it comes to events like the death of Michael Brown and the subsequent violence in Ferguson, words fail. This time, we might have to settle for action.

Charles Lane is a member of The Washington Post's editorial board.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Words won't stop terrorism The Washington Post

With each day, the barbarism of the Islamist extremists terrorizing Syria and Iraq becomes more evident — as does the need for the United States and its allies to act more vigorously to block their rise.

On Tuesday the group that calls itself the Islamic State released a video of the beheading of American journalist James Foley. Foley, as President Barack Obama said Wednesday, "reported from difficult and dangerous places. ... [He] courageously told the stories of his fellow human beings." One reason there has been so little outcry as more than 150,000 Syrians have been killed and millions rendered homeless is that reporting on that nation's brutal war is so dangerous. Those like Foley, who risk everything to bear witness, deserve our admiration, and his killers deserve our contempt.

Foley is one among thousands of victims murdered by the Islamic State as it has conquered territory in Syria and Iraq. ... In recent days, the Obama administration has made some progress in blocking the progress of this terrorist group. U.S. air raids have helped Iraq and Kurdish forces recapture some lost territory. U.S. pressure may have hastened the appointment of a new prime minister in Iraq, who, it is hoped, will work across sectarian lines rather than his predecessor and so be better positioned to rally his country to defeat the so-called caliphate of the Islamic State. Obama has emphasized the importance of enlisting the Iraqi army and other local partners in confronting this scourge, a goal with which we wholeheartedly concur.

But urging others into the fray will not be sufficient. Nor is it wise to assume that the Islamic State will collapse under the weight of its cruelty. "People like this ultimately fail," Obama said Wednesday. "They fail because the future is won by those who build and not destroy." That may be so. But history provides too many examples of destroyers who hold power for long stretches of time and do not lose it until they are dislodged by "builders" who are finally roused to action.

For three years the United States stood aside as the Islamist extremists built up their strength inside Syria. Washington was surprised in June when they burst into Iraq, captured Mosul and threatened Baghdad and surprised again this month when they threatened Kurdistan. Now, according to most accounts, they are consolidating their hold inside a large swath of territory spanning the two nations even as they fight to expand. They are training hundreds of foreign terrorists, including from Europe and the U.S., who could easily slip back into their home countries with battle intent. They already proclaim their enmity to America. America needs a genuine strategy in response.

Syria's disarmament a mirage The Wall Street Journal

It wasn't long ago that President Barack Obama boasted of getting Syria to surrender its chemical weapons without firing a shot. "It turned out that we are actually getting all the chemical weapons," Obama told the New Yorker last November. "And nobody reports that anymore."

But it turned out there was a good reason to hold the applause. On Monday the White House released a statement in the president's name celebrating the destruction of Bashar Assad's declared stocks of



Cardinal Fernando Filoni, right, Pope Francis' special envoy to Iraq, blesses a displaced Iraqi man from the Yazidi community at a shelter for displaced Christians and Yazidis in Mangedesh, Iraq, on Saturday. Islamic extremists shot 80 Yazidi men to death in Iraq, then abducted their wives and children, officials and eyewitnesses reported Saturday.

chemical weapons aboard the MV Cape Ray, a U.S. ship fitted with specialized hydrolysis systems that neutralize sarin and other deadly agents.

Then came the caveat. "We will watch closely to see that Syria fulfills its commitment to destroy its remaining declared chemical weapons production facilities," the statement read. "In addition, serious questions remain with respect to the omissions and discrepancies in Syria's declaration to the OPCW and about continued allegations of use."

The OPCW is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Hague-based outfit that has overseen removal of 1,300 tons of chemical agents from Syria. The organization complained for months that Damascus was slow-rolling the disarmament process as it continued to strike and bomb its enemies into submission. In April the Assad regime began dropping chlorine bombs against civilian targets. Chlorine violates the Chemical Weapons Convention, which Syria joined last year as part of the deal that Obama used to celebrate.

Then there are those "omissions and discrepancies" cited by the president. We are not privy to the intelligence, but every source we talk to says the Syrians have surely not declared everything in their possession. It's also hard to believe the administration would underline the defects in its own purported achievement if there weren't serious doubts among U.S. spokes about the completeness of the Syrian declaration. ...

The Assad regime also likely retains the network of scientists and engineers needed to reconstitute a weapons program once it feels secure enough to do so. That day may not be far off, thanks in part to the chemical deal that spared Assad from U.S. bombing as he unleashed a new offensive against moderate rebel forces ... [who] are also losing ground to the Islamic State. No matter what happens to Syria's chemical weapons, the country's real weapons of mass destruction — the Assad regime and the Islamic State — have gained in their destructive power. Such has been the result of Obama's abdication of global leadership, now cloaked as a triumph for disarmament.

Ancient structures still at risk The (Memphis, Tenn.) Commercial

The radical Islamic jihadis are good at many things — beheadings, amputations, terrorizing helpless schoolgirls, alienating populations — but public relations is not one of them.

They should have learned their lesson in

March 2001, when they blew up, over the objections of most of the civilized world, including respected Muslim leaders and scholars, two massive sixth-century Buddhist sculptures in Afghanistan. Their argument, not supported by serious Muslim scholarship, was that they were pagan idols and thus under Islamic law had to be destroyed. Chagrined by the world's hostile reaction, they revised their story to say that they, the jihadis, were offended that the world would pay to preserve the statues while Afghan children were starving, due in part to the depredations and disruptions of the radical Islamists.

Having failed to learn, or at least remember, that lesson, the radical Sunni militias who recently overran the Iraqi city of Mosul set about destroying, on the grounds of idolatry, prominent religious sites like the tombs of the prophet Jonah, revered by three major religions; the prophet Seth, reputedly the third son of Adam and Eve; and Jerisim, known to Iraqi Christians as St. George.

In all, according to a Shiite website, the self-styled Islamic State destroyed 30 shrines and 15 mosques. Since among the Islamic State's first steps was to expel all the Christians, no one seems sure what happened to their churches and holy sites. The rebels had planned to blow up a beloved local landmark, an 800-year-old minaret known as al-Hadba, the hunchback, for its distinctive lean. The townspeople, according to accounts from Mosul, surrounded the minaret to keep the militants from initially demolishing it.

The destruction of thousands of years of religious treasures and Iraqi culture goes on. If conversion is the goal of this conflict, a visit by more U.S. F-15s and A-10s might make true believers out of these vandals.

Senate NSA bill still lacking Los Angeles Times

A little more than a year after former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed that the federal government was collecting and storing the telephone records of millions of Americans, Congress is poised to end the program and provide significant protection for a broad range of personal information sought by government investigators.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has proposed a version of the bill that is significantly more protective of privacy than one passed by the House in May. Like the House bill, Leahy's proposal would end the NSA's bulk collection of telephone "metadata" — information about the source, destination and duration of phone calls that investigators can "query" in search of pos-

sible connections to foreign terrorism.

But the Senate version, worked out in negotiations with the White House and civil liberties groups, imposes stricter limits on the search terms used to obtain not only phone data but other records as well. For example, the bill makes it clear that the government may not use a search term that would collect all information relating to a particular service provider or a broad geographic region denoted by a ZIP Code or area code.

Finally, the bill provides for the declassification and publication "to the greatest extent practicable" of opinions by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court and its appellate arm, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review.

Important as it is, the Leahy bill addresses in only minor ways the collection of information about Americans as a byproduct of the electronic surveillance targeting foreigners living abroad. Unlike the collection of telephone metadata, these activities capture the actual contents of phone conversations, emails and social media postings, meaning that if an American is in contact with a friend or relative abroad, his private musings can be swept up in the electronic dragnet. That creates the possibility of "backdoor" surveillance of Americans without the individual warrants required by the 4th Amendment.

A panel appointed by President Barack Obama recommended that information about Americans incidentally collected in foreign surveillance be "purged upon detection" unless it has foreign intelligence value or is necessary to prevent harm to others. ...

For all its limitations, the USA Freedom Act is a testimony to the importance of informed public debate.

Vetting AF recruiters will help San Antonio Express-News

The Air Force has taken a new way in reforming recruit training since sex scandals rocked the service's boot camp at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. It is now making equally important strides with recruiters.

An Express-News article by Sig Christenson on Monday shed some light on the Air Force's revamped training program for recruiters — Inspire, Dissuade, Detect, Deter and Hold Accountable, also known as ID3A.

It was bad enough when sexual abuse occurred during boot camp, where trainees occupied particularly powerful positions over vulnerable recruits. But recruiters also occupy a position of power, dictating whether an eager potential recruit can get in and under what circumstances.

One of the most important changes came in who could become recruiters. Air Force personnel used to volunteer for the duty. Now, they are chosen by commanders worldwide and are thoroughly vetted.

The revamped program emphasizes the service's core values of integrity, excellence and service before self. And lines have been drawn.

There are now strict prohibitions on personal and sexual contact with potential recruits. And applicants have been empowered to report inappropriate contact.

At least one task remains. It is, however, in Congress' court. Congress earlier this year reformed much of how the military handles sexual assaults. Commanders can no longer overturn convictions on sexual assaults. Victims now get their own lawyers to defend them against a system that seemed to re-victimize them. Criminal review is now required if a commander vetoes a prosecutor's wish to go to trial.

While there are improvements, what's significantly left undone is taking away such decisions from commanders altogether and placing them with experts in the legal process.

The Senate rejected this measure by New York Democrat Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. It should revisit the issue.

BASKETBALL/AUTO RACING



KATHY WILLEMS/AP

Dominican Republic forward Orlando Sanchez (16) defends as U.S. forward Rudy Gay protects the ball during the first half of Wednesday's exhibition game at Madison Square Garden in New York. The United States won 105-62.

Rose sits as US wins easily

By BRIAN MAHONEY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Derrick Rose heard the fans chanting his name, and yes, he would've loved to give them what they wanted.

But after missing most of the past two years and with still a long summer of basketball ahead, he's willing to take this return slowly.

"Just trying to protect myself, just knowing that this is a long, long schedule and this is the most basketball I'll be playing in two years," Rose said.

"I want to be out there, but at the same time my health is the No. 1 issue right now."

With Rose sitting out, Kyrie Irving started and made all five shots, scoring 12 points as the U.S. national basketball team beat the Dominican Republic 105-62 on Wednesday night in an exhibition game.

James Harden also scored 12 in limited playing time for the Americans, who used their subs for most of the second half. Rudy

Gay and DeMar DeRozan each scored 13 points.

Rose and U.S. assistant Tom Thibodeau, Rose's coach with the Chicago Bulls, both said he was experiencing general soreness.

Rose's absence allowed U.S. coach Mike Krzyzewski to take a longer look at other players with cuts coming soon. The Americans have 16 players on the roster and have to get down to 12 before the upcoming Basketball World Cup.

Krzyzewski said there would be no cuts before Friday's game against Puerto Rico, and he said Rose would play that night.

Houston Rockets forward Francisco Garcia scored 14 points for the Dominican Republic, coached by South Florida's Orlando Antigua. The Dominicans are without their best player, the Atlanta Hawks' Al Horford, who is recovering from a torn right pectoral muscle.

The Americans leave Saturday for Spain, where they will finish their preparations with a final exhibition against Slovenia. The World Cup opens on Aug. 30.



KATHY WILLEMS/AP

U.S. center Andre Drummond, rear, defends Dominican Republic center Jack Michael Martinez during the first half.

Stewart skipping 3rd race

By JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Tony Stewart will not race Saturday night at Bristol Motor Speedway, the third Sprint Cup race he's skipped since his car struck and killed Kevin Ward Jr. during a sprint car race.

Stewart's decision was announced Wednesday and Jeff Burton will once again replace him in the No. 14 Chevrolet. Burton also drove Stewart's car at Michigan last weekend.

Stewart-Haas Racing is allowing Stewart to take the time he needs away from the track, and the team statement indicated the three-time NASCAR champion is taking it week-by-week. Stewart will not have to decide on another race until the Aug. 31 event at Atlanta.

Stewart has been in seclusion since the Aug. 9 incident at an upstate New York dirt track. He has not commented since he issued a statement the day after Ward's death.

Stewart also pulled out of the race at Watkins Glen, which began about 12 hours after his car hit Ward at the event in Canadigua, New York. Ward's car had spun into a wall as he and Stewart raced for position, and the 20-year-old climbed out to confront Stewart.

Authorities said the first car to pass Ward had to swerve to miss hitting the driver, who was gesturing toward the NASCAR star. The front of Stewart's car then appeared to support criminal intent by Stewart, but the investigation is expected to last at least another week. Povero said this week there were no new updates.

None of Stewart's peers has spoken to the driver since the accident. But they've come to his defense, with six-time champion Jimmie Johnson saying nothing he's seen has convinced him that Ward's death was anything but a tragic accident.

Stewart has 48 career Cup wins in 542 starts. He has one career win at Bristol, in 2001.

Burton made just his third start of the season last week. The 21-time Sprint Cup winner won at Bristol in 2008 and has 15 top-10 finishes in 40 career starts.



Stewart

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Calendar

Sept. 1 — Active rosters expand to 40 players.
Sept. 30 — Postseason begins.
Oct. 22 — World Series begins, city of American League champion.
November TBA — Deadline for teams make qualifying offers to their eligible free players who became free agents, 10th day after World Series.
November TBA — Deadline for free agents to accept qualifying offers, 12th day after World Series.

MLB

Angels lose ace Richards to injury

Pitcher hurts knee in win over BoSox

By HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Garrett Richards lay on the ground for several minutes, his left knee damaged and his season seemingly over.

The right-hander's injury while running to cover first base is a big loss that overshadowed the Los Angeles Angels' seventh win in eight games.

"Winning the game, obviously, it's always important, but it's secondary to what happened," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said after an 8-3 win over the Boston Red Sox on Wednesday night. "This is a tough night for us. We'll just see where Garrett is. Obviously, it's a significant injury."

Richards, 33-4 with a 2.61 ERA, left after 1 1/2 innings with a patellar injury. He will be re-evaluated in Los Angeles on Thursday.

"I had a chance to talk him," Angels pitcher Jered Weaver said. "He just wanted to know what the story was. He wasn't feeling too much pain when he was on the table. When the doctor came in

and told him that he might have done something to his patellar tendon and there might be surgery involved, he kind of lost it."

The injury cast a cloud over a strong game by Josh Hamilton, who broke out of a 5-for-41 slump with two hits and three RBIs. Before Tuesday's game, he took extra batting practice.

"Clearing my head and just remembering what it was like as a little kid, in high school, to go out and take BP and have fun," Hamilton said. "It sure helped."

Richards left trailing 2-0. Boston made it 3-0 on David Ortiz's homer in the third off Cory Rasmus (3-1).

That gave Ortiz his eighth 30-homer season with Boston, tying Ted Williams' club record. Ortiz went 4-for-4 and is 8-for-10 in the series with four walks. Alex Hassan pinch hit for him in the ninth and grounded out.

"He was starting to get a little sore. He's obviously been on base this entire series, and he started to get some tightness," Boston manager John Farrell said.



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Angels starting pitcher Garrett Richards grimaces as he is attended to on the field after injuring his knee during the second inning Wednesday against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park.

The Angels scored a run in the fourth on a double by Hamilton and an RBI single by Kendrick, and added five in the fifth.

Clay Buchholz (5-8) took a 3-1 lead into the fifth but let the first six batters reach base. That sent Boston toward its fourth straight loss and the Angels to a 1 1/2-game lead in the AL West over the Oakland Athletics.

"Just missed location with a couple of pitches and they were able to put a big inning together,"

Buchholz said.

The Angels loaded the bases on a single by Erick Aybar, a walk to Chris Iannetta and a single by Efrén Navarro. A walk to Kole Calhoun drove in a run, and Los Angeles tied it when Mike Trout's popup to short right field dropped in. Calhoun was forced out at second after holding up to see if the ball would be caught.

The next three batters drove in runs: a single by Albert Pujols, a sacrifice fly by Hamilton, and a single by Kendrick.

Richards left the field on a stretcher after being hurt on a potential double-play grounder. Brock Holt grounded to first baseman Pujols, who threw to shortstop Aybar for the out at second. Richards fell while running to first for a return throw, but Aybar spun and threw instead to third where Xander Bogaerts, who had run past the base, dove back safely.

"Garrett's taking this hard," Scioscia said. "This is a huge blow for him."

Roundup

Porcello, Martinez set pace as Tigers rout Marlins

The Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Rick Porcello hasn't won any Cy Young awards like three of his teammates, but he has pitched some of the better games of the season for the Detroit Tigers.

One of them came Wednesday night when Porcello pitched a three-hitter for his AL-leading third shutout, a 6-0 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays.

"Nine shutout innings. You literally can't ask for anything more," said Tiger manager Brad Ausmus.

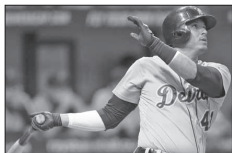
Victor Martinez hit a grand slam and drove in five runs for the Tigers, who handed the Rays their fourth loss in a row. Porcello (14-9) moved into a tie for the league lead in wins, retiring 20 straight batters after Ben Zobrist's double in the first.

"I felt pretty good from the get-go really," he said. "Even the hit I gave up to Zobrist was a good pitch, and I felt pretty confident that if I kept making pitches like that I was going to get guys out and pitch deep into the game."

Porcello walked none and struck out four in his first win since Aug. 2. He matched Miami's Henderson Alvarez for the major league lead in shutouts and became the first Tiger with three in a season since Jeff Weaver in 2002.

"I think the biggest thing, when you get a game going like this, is to get the first guy out," Porcello said. "If you can get the first guy out, especially for me, or keep the double play intact when somebody does get on base, that makes the game a lot quicker."

The Rays were shut out for the 15th time, most of any American League team. They



CHRIS O'NEARA/AP

The Tigers' Victor Martinez follows the flight of his grand slam off Tampa Bay Rays relief pitcher Kirby Yates on Wednesday in St. Petersburg, Fla.

didn't get a leadoff man on base until the eighth.

"From the side it looked like a wiffle ball, like playing in your back yard and the ball is just doing all kinds of weird things," said Rays manager Joe Maddon. "For the most part [Porcello] got a lot of groundball outs. That's what he is."

Rangers 5, Marlins 4: Nick Martinez allowed two runs in six innings in his homecoming. Alex Ross drove in two runs, and visiting Texas roughed up Miami starter Nathan Eovaldi.

Nationals 3, Diamondbacks 2: Pitcher Anthony Rendon's RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted struggling Washington past visiting Arizona for its ninth straight victory.

Bryce Harper opened the ninth with a single off Evan Marshall (4-3) and went to third on Kevin Frandsen's base hit. Out of

the starting lineup for the first time in 63 games, Rendon ripped a single past third baseman Cliff Pennington, scoring Harper. **Padres 4, Dodgers 1:** Alexi Amarista had two hits and drove in a run, Eric Stults combined with three relievers on a six-hit, and visiting San Diego beat NL West-leading Los Angeles.

Phillies 4, Mariners 3: Wil Nieves doubled and had three hits, and Cole Hamels got a victory when he wasn't at his best as Philadelphia defeated Seattle.

Chase Utley had the go-ahead RBI, and Ben Revere and Marlon Byrd drove in runs for the Phillies, who won for just the third time in nine games.

Mets 8, Athletics 5: Lucas Duda hit a three-run homer, Eric Campbell also connected, and visiting New York snapped a three-game losing streak.

Blue Jays 9, Brewers 5: Jose Bautista's three-run homer capped a five-run sixth inning, and visiting Toronto outslugged Milwaukee, snapping the Brewers' five-game winning streak.

Bautista hit a 1-2 pitch from reliever Brandon Kintzler into the Brewers' bullpen in right field. **Pirates 3, Braves 2:** Justin Upton dropped a routine fly ball in the ninth inning which set the stage for Gaby Sanchez's game-winning sacrifice fly that capped a comeback as host Pittsburgh beat Atlanta.

David Carpenter (4-4) took the loss after allowing an unearned run.

Astros 5, Yankees 2: Scott Feldman shut down slumping host New York again, and Robbie Grossman snapped a seventh-inning tie with a two-run single.

Dexter Fowler had an RBI double, Jose

Altuve added a run-scoring single, and the Astros did more damage to New York's playoff chances with their fourth victory in five meetings this season.

Orioles 4, White Sox 3: Nelson Cruz took the major league lead with his 33rd home run, and surging Baltimore completed a three-game sweep of host Chicago.

Adam Ayres and Steve Pearce also homered for the Orioles, who have won four straight and extended their AL East lead to nine games over second-place Toronto.

Indians 5, Twins 0: Rookie T.J. House pitched shutout ball into the sixth inning, and Mike Aviles had three hits and two RBIs to lift visiting Cleveland.

Giants 8, Cubs 3: Jake Peavy pitched seven solid innings in his fifth start with San Francisco, and the visiting Giants rolled past Chicago.

Hunter Pence and Andrew Susac homered, and Travis Ishikawa drove in three runs with pair of doubles among three hits to help the Giants strengthen their hold on an NL wild card spot.

Rockies 5, Royals 2: Matt McBride hit his first career grand slam, and Jorge De La Rosa pitched eight crisp innings, helping host Colorado cool off Kansas City.

The less-trimmed Royals' lead to one game over Detroit in the AL Central.

Cardinals 7, Reds 3: Lance Lynn beat Cincinnati for the third straight time, Jonny Peralta hit a bases-clearing double, and host St. Louis completed a three-game sweep.

Reds starter Johnny Cueto (15-7) was off-kilter from the get-go and missed a chance to become the majors' first 16-game winner.

MLB/SPORTS BRIEFS



JEFF HAYNES/AP

A member of the grounds crew works on the field after a heavy rain soaked Wrigley Field during the fifth inning of the game between the San Francisco Giants and the Chicago Cubs on Tuesday.

Rare win for Giants: MLB upholds protest

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The San Francisco Giants on Wednesday became the first team since 1986 to win a protest filed with Major League Baseball, and will now get to resume a rain-shortened game the Chicago Cubs thought they had won.

MLB executive Joe Torre ruled on Tuesday night's game at Wrigley Field that was called after 4½ innings. The Cubs were declared the winners by a 2-0 score.

Now, it is instead a suspended game that was to resume Thursday afternoon with the Cubs batting in the bottom of the fifth. The playoff-contending Giants and Chicago have a regularly scheduled game set to begin later Thursday night.

"I thought we had a strong case," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "I'm just thankful and grateful that they [MLB] were open minded."

"They listened and they looked at it and I think it's the fair thing to do."

A short rainstorm caused a delay of more than 4½ hours Tuesday after the grounds crew couldn't put the tarp down quickly. The umpires said the field was unplayable and called it at 1:16 a.m.

MLB ruled that the tarp had not been properly put away after its previous use. Therefore, under provisions of Official Baseball Rule 4.12 (a) (3) there is a "malfunction of a mechanical field device under control of the home club."

Cubs general manager Jed Hoyer called it a "just" decision. "The last thing you want is a playoff team feeling bitter about the result here," Hoyer said. "And obviously it was caused by our organization. It's a good outcome."

"Hopefully we win the game. We have a 2-0 lead and pick it up

from there," he said.

Hoyer said the Cubs had hoped all along to play a complete game on Tuesday night, and that the Wrigley Field grounds crew and the umpires were caught off-guard by a "weird weather pattern" and a lack of advance warning of the localized downpour.

That resulted in the field "wetter than usual," according to Hoyer, who added there was no rain at his house, located 12 blocks away from Wrigley Field. "I really have to compliment the Cubs," he said. "They were all for this, too. They wanted to do the right thing."

Giants President Larry Baer said in a statement: "We appreciate Major League Baseball's careful review of our protest that will allow last night's game to be continued tomorrow."

"We want to thank Commissioner Bud Selig, Commissioner-elect Rob Manfred, Executive Vice President for Baseball Operations Joe Torre and the Chicago Cubs organization for their cooperation throughout this process," he said.

The last time a team won a protest filed with MLB was June 16, 1986, when St. Louis played at Pittsburgh. There were two rain delays at Three Rivers Stadium, and the Pirates correctly contended those didn't meet the National League's 30-minute threshold for cancellation.

MLB said in its statement that after watching video of the trouble at Wrigley Field and talking to Cubs representatives, "the Cubs' inability to deploy the tarp appropriately was caused by the failure to properly wrap and spot the tarp after its last use."

"As a result, the grounds crew was unable to properly deploy the tarp after the rain worsened," MLB said.

Briefly

Vegas gets to Davis in LLWS

Female pitcher takes loss; Philadelphia falls into elimination game

The Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Mo'ne Davis didn't have her best stuff when she and her Philadelphia teammates needed it most, and Las Vegas took advantage.

Dallan Cave and Brennan Holligan hit two-run homers, lefty reliever Austin Kryszczuk got out of two big jams, and Las Vegas beat Philadelphia and its star pitcher 8-1 in the Little League World Series on Wednesday night.

Davis, just the 18th girl to play in the Little League World Series and the only one to win a game on the mound, took the loss. "Mo'ne didn't have her A game today," Philly manager Alex Rice said. "At this point, we're playing to get to Saturday."

The victory puts Las Vegas in Saturday's U.S. title game and sends Philadelphia into an elimination game on Thursday night against Chicago's Jackie Robinson West in a matchup of inner-city teams. The Great Lakes champion beat Pearland, Texas, 6-1 on Tuesday night in an elimination game.

"I think it's terrific," Rice said. "I've been looking forward to playing Chicago since we got here."

Davis, the darling of the sports world with her amazing success and poise, was both wonderful and ordinary on a night made short because of pitch-count rules.

She allowed three runs and six hits and struck out six in 2½ innings before leaving after 55 pitches. That makes her eligible to pitch again in the U.S. championship game on Saturday.

Davis played first after her stint on the mound and was switched to right field in the top of the sixth.

Las Vegas entered the game on a serious roll. The Mountain Ridge Little League champions beat Rapid City, S.D., 12-2 and then routed Chicago 13-2 in four innings in a mercy-rule game on Sunday behind five homers, a grand slam by Brad Stone and two from Kryszczuk.

Lynx's Moore wins WNBA MVP award

Maya Moore put up incredible numbers all season for Minnesota. Now she's got her first WNBA MVP award.

Moore earned the league's most valuable player award on Thursday, hours before the Lynx opened their Western Conference semifinals playoff series with the San Antonio Stars.

Moore led the league in scoring, averaging a career-best 23.9 points per set a WNBA record by scoring at least 30 points 12 times, including in four straight games.

Moore received 35 of the 38 first-place votes, surpassing Phoenix's Diana Taurasi and



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

Las Vegas' Brennan Holligan, right, is greeted by Philadelphia third baseman Jack Rice as he heads to third after hitting a two-run home run off Philadelphia pitcher Carter Davis during the sixth inning of a U.S. semifinal game at the Little League World Series in South Williamsport, Pa., on Wednesday. Las Vegas won 8-1.

Atlanta's Angel McCoughtry. Los Angeles' Candace Parker was fourth and Phoenix's Brittney Griner finished fifth.

Jim Kelly's exam shows no sign of cancer

Hall of Fame quarterback Jim Kelly received encouraging news in his battle with cancer.

An initial physical exam showed no evidence of sinus cancer three months after the former Buffalo Bills quarterback completed radiation and chemotherapy treatments. Dr. Peter Costantino said in a release issued by New York City's Lenox Hill Hospital on Wednesday.

"The treatments have so far completely eliminated Mr. Kelly's pain, and his level of function has essentially returned to normal," said Costantino, who heads the hospital's head and neck institute. "Further, on physical examination, there is no evidence of the cancer."

The statement was issued a day after Kelly visited the hospital for a follow-up examination. Costantino said a series of tests over the next week will determine if further treatments are necessary.

In other NFL news: ■ The Bengals and Vontaze Burfitt agreed to a three-year contract extension that will pay the Pro Bowl linebacker a maximum of \$20.05 million through 2017, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.

Burfitt is making \$570,000 in the final year of his original deal with Cincinnati, which took a minimal risk when it signed him

as an undrafted free agent from Arizona State in 2012.

Under his extension, he'll make \$10 million through next summer, said the person speaking on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn't been announced by the team or signed by the linebacker.

Oakland Raiders fullback Marcel Reece escaped a scare when an injury to his right foot was not as significant as initially feared and he expects to be at full strength when the season opens next month.

■ Former Minnesota Vikings center Mick Tingelhoff has been nominated as the senior finalist for the Pro Football Hall of Fame's 2015 class of inductees.

The Hall of Fame made the announcement Wednesday. Tingelhoff will join 15 modern-era finalists and two contributor finalists on the ballot, but the endorsement from the Hall of Fame's senior committee was a big step toward enshrinement for the six-time Pro Bowl pick.

Clemson RB Brooks to miss season

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson tailback Zac Brooks will miss the season with a foot injury.

The school announced Brooks' injury Wednesday. Football spokesman Tim Bourret said Brooks will need surgery but per Clemson policy did not provide specific details on the injury.

Brooks was the 16th-ranked Tigers' top returning running back after playing behind 1,000-yard rusher Rod McDowell last season. Brooks rushed 48 times for

NFL



Saints running back Mark Ingram, left, carries as Titans free safety George Wilson tries to tackle him during the first half of Friday's preseason game in New Orleans.

ROGELIO SOLAN/AP

Renewed confidence

Saints' Ingram starting strong

By BRETT MARTEL
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS Saints running back Mark Ingram isn't letting a humbling start to his pro career lower his opinion of what he can still accomplish in the NFL.

With 1,605 yards from scrimmage and 11 touchdowns in his first three preseasons, Alabama's first Heisman Trophy winner is now a widely perceived underachiever in the NFL.

Still, Ingram said this week that he sees in himself the potential to be one of the most productive and dynamic running backs in NFL history.

"If somebody's out here playing the game and they don't want to be the best ever to play the game, I don't think they're doing the right thing," Ingram said. "I would've said it as a rookie. I would've said it 10 years ago. I'll say it 10 years from now."

While the preseason doesn't always offer a true reflection of a player's growth, Ingram's performance through a pair of exhibition games seems to back up his assertion that he is increasingly

comfortable with what it takes to succeed as an NFL running back — from reading defenses to setting up blocks to pass-blocking.

He even appears more involved in the passing game, turning a short catch into a 23-yard touchdown in last Friday night's 31-24 preseason victory over Tennessee.

"In high school I played receiver. If you look at my recruiting (bio), it says, 'Athlete,'" Ingram noted. "In college, I caught a lot of passes."

Indeed, many believe he won over 2009 Heisman voters with his 69-yard gain on a screen pass in Alabama's 2009 SEC Championship game victory over Florida.

Ingram has only 24 career receptions for 143 yards and no touchdowns in the NFL, but catching the ball is in his genes. His father, Mark Ingram Sr., played wide receiver in the NFL for 10 seasons, mostly with the New York Giants.

"Running routes and catching footballs was one of the first things I did when I was young. So I'm comfortable catching passes, comfortable running routes," Ingram said. "I haven't had a lot of



Preseason
New Orleans at Indianapolis
AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Sunday CET
9 a.m. Sunday JKT

opportunity to do that here. But I think I can be just as good as anybody else."

Ingram had high hopes heading into last season, only to struggle behind a new zone blocking scheme before sitting out several games with a toe injury. However, he was among the Saints' most effective running back late last season, rushing for 146 yards in two playoff games.

While Ingram rushed for only 386 yards last season, he also finished with an average of nearly 5 yards per carry. Through two preseason games, he's carried 13 times for 102 — an average of 7.8 yards per carry — and had a 22-yard scoring run.

"I know I'm an all-purpose back, a complete back," he added. "I can do everything."

Cutler: Holmes can be good fit

The Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — The Chicago Bears have sorted through numerous candidates to find a suitable replacement for injured third wide receiver Marquess Wilson the past three weeks.

So quarterback Jay Cutler sees nothing wrong with giving a chance to a player with a so-so past.

When the Bears signed former Jets and Steelers receiver Santonio Holmes Saturday to vie for an opening caused by Wilson's broken collarbone, it took only a short time before Cutler and Holmes were working together on the offense.

"You know, Santonio was here, probably had signed his contract and 60 minutes later he was on the field with Jay, and throwing routes," Bears offensive coordinator Aaron Kromer said.

Cutler has gotten a good look the past two days in practice at Holmes and anticipates Holmes making an impact in a competition with former veteran Josh Morgan.

"It looks good," Cutler said. "He's explosive. He'd probably, to be honest — he's a little bit rusty. He's been out of football."

"But getting in and out of cuts, catches the ball well, extremely explosive, fast. He's exciting. We've just got to get him caught up with everything right now. It's hard coming in where we are offensively and just kind of throwing him into the mix."

It's possible Holmes will play Friday at Seattle in the third preseason game. But the first chance at the spot Friday will go to Morgan, a former Washington Redskins and San Francisco 49er.

"He's had two good weeks of practice, two good games, productive games," coach Marc Trestman said of Morgan. "He's made plays out there."

"I think he deserves a chance to step up now and get the first opportunity to do that."

The 30-year-old Holmes had 23 catches last year, the second-lowest total of his career, while battling a hamstring injury. The Jets cut him to save \$8.25 million



Preseason
Chicago at Seattle
Joined in progress
AFN-Sports
5 a.m. Saturday CET
Noon Saturday JKT

against the salary cap. He had suffered a career-threatening foot injury in 2012, but says he is over the injuries.

Questions still linger about a dispute he had with former Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez, and an argument he got into with tackle Wayne Hunter that led to his benching in a 2011 Jets game.

"That's in the past," Holmes said. "It's neither here nor there right now. I think being in this new organization is a new move for me and a great opportunity for me to take advantage of and be part of a great organization."

Wide receiver Brandon Marshall is the Bears receiver leader, and in the past a controversial figure himself.

"We came in together," Holmes said about Marshall. "He's a great guy, first and foremost. He's a Pro Bowler and he leads by example."

Trestman thinks Holmes is a good fit regardless of his past. "I mean, people change, they get into new venues, new environments," Trestman said. "You're out for a while, you get a hard look at where you are. Not only in your work life as well as in other aspects of your life."

"We feel he's coming here in a good place, he's coming into a great locker room. Guys have reached out to him and are willing to help him and give him an opportunity to help our football team, but it will be a process and it will be day to day. But it's off to a good start and we'll see where it takes us."



ANDREW NELLES/AP

Bears quarterback Jay Cutler, above, is working with receiver Santonio Holmes to try to get him caught up with the offense. Holmes and Josh Morgan are competing to replace third receiver Marquess Wilson, who broke his collarbone.

NFL



Blount

Bell

Steelers face pot charges

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Steelers running backs Le'Veon Bell and LeGarrette Blount will be charged with marijuana possession following a traffic stop Wednesday.

Ross Township detective Brian Kohlhepp said traffic officer Sean Stafiej pulled over a car operated by Bell around 1:30 p.m. after Stafiej, who was on a motorcycle, noticed a strong odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle.

Stafiej found a 20-gram bag of marijuana inside the car. Bell, Blount and a female passenger all claimed ownership of the marijuana according to police.

Bell was taken to a hospital to have blood drawn and is expected to be charged with driving under the influence of marijuana.

Bell, Blount and the female passenger were arrested and released. All three are expected to receive notice of formal charges through the mail said Kohlhepp. The possession and DUI charges are both misdemeanors.

The Steelers were to play a preseason game in Philadelphia on Thursday. Bell, 22, and the 27-year-old Blount, signed as a free agent in the offseason, were expected to see significant playing time in the main lineup for starters before Pittsburgh's Sept. 7 opener against Cleveland.

"We are aware of the reports and still gathering information," Steelers spokesman Burt Lauten said. "We will have no further comment at this time."

Bell set a franchise record for total yards by a rookie back last season, smashing the mark set by Hall of Famer Franco Harris.

The second-round pick out of Michigan State ran for 860 yards and eight touchdowns and caught 45 passes for 399 yards despite missing the first three games of the season with a foot injury.

Hazy: No hard numbers on how many players use drug

FROM BACK PAGE

A Gallup poll last year found 58 percent of Americans believe marijuana should be legalized. That's already happened in Colorado and Washington — the states that are the home of last season's Super Bowl teams.

The World Anti-Doping Agency has said it does not need to catch out-of-competition marijuana users. At least one high-profile coach, Pete Carroll of the champion Seahawks, publicly said he'd like to see the NFL study whether marijuana can help players.

There are no hard numbers on how many NFL players are using marijuana, but anecdotal evidence, including the arrest or league discipline of no fewer than a dozen players for pot over the past 18 months, suggests use is becoming more common.

Redskins safety Ryan Clark didn't want to pinpoint the number of current NFL players who smoke pot but said, "I know a lot of guys who don't regularly smoke marijuana who would use it during the season."

Washington wouldn't put a specific number on it but said he, too, knew his share of players who weren't shy about lighting up when he was in the league, including one guy "who just hated the pain pills they were giving out at the time." Another longtime defensive lineman, Marcellus Wiley, estimates half the players in the average NFL locker room were using it by the time he shut down his career in 2006.

"They are leaning on it to cope with the pain," said Wiley, who played defensive line in the league for 10 seasons. "They are leaning on it to cope with the anxiety of the game."

The NFL is fighting lawsuits

Redskins safety Ryan Clark, below, didn't want to pinpoint the number of current NFL players who smoke pot but said, "I know a lot of guys who don't regularly smoke marijuana who would use it during the season."



THE SYNOPSIS

At issue

The NFL is facing a drug dilemma — how to allow its players to use marijuana as a pain reliever without condoning recreational use.

More say its OK

According to a Gallup poll last year, 58 percent of Americans believe marijuana should be legalized. That's already the case in Colorado and Washington — the homes of last season's Super Bowl teams. The uptick in pot suspensions certainly suggests that more NFL players are using the drug, too.

Possible upside

The league is fighting lawsuits over concussions and painkillers, and some argue both issues could be alleviated with a more permissive marijuana policy.

What they've said

Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll has said he'd like to see the NFL study whether marijuana can help players. Commissioner Roger Goodell has been cautious in his comments. Before last season's Super Bowl, Goodell said the league would "follow the medicine" and not rule out allowing players to use marijuana for medical purposes.

Will it really help?

The science, however, is slow-moving and expensive and might not ever be conclusive, says behavioral psychologist Ryan Vandrey, who studies marijuana use at Johns Hopkins. Marijuana may work better for some people, while narcotics and other painkillers might be better for others.

A billboard calling on the NFL to stop punishing players for using marijuana is shown in front of Sports Authority Field at Mile High in Denver last year. Attitudes toward the drug have softened around the nation, and many would like to see the league follow suit.

ED ANDRESIA/AP

on two fronts — concussions and painkillers — both of which, some argue, could be positively influenced if marijuana were better tolerated by the league.

The science, however, is slow-moving and expensive and might not ever be conclusive, says behavioral psychologist Ryan Vandrey, who studies marijuana use at Johns Hopkins. Marijuana may work better for some people, while narcotics and other painkillers might be better for others.

"Different medicines work differently from person to person," Vandrey said. "There's pretty good science that shows marijuana does have pain-relieving properties. Whether it's a better pain reliever than the other things available has never been evaluated."

Washington, who is part of the concussion lawsuit, is working with a bio-pharmaceutical and phyto-medical company called KannaLife Sciences that recently received licensing from the National Institutes of Health to develop a drug to treat concussions using derivatives from medical marijuana. Co-founder Thoma Kikis, who has been working on cannabis-based solutions to concussions for a few years, said he approached the NFL about signing on to the research.

"They didn't want to meet, didn't want to take a position to create any kind of controversy," Kikis said. "I understand that. But ultimately, they're going to have to make a decision and look into different research."

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has treaded gingerly around the subject. Before last season's Super Bowl he said the league would "follow the medicine" and not rule out allowing

players to use marijuana for medical purposes. An NFL spokesman reiterated that this month, saying if medical advisers inform the league it should consider modifying the policy, it would explore possible changes.

A spokesman for the players' union declined comment on marijuana, beyond saying the union is always looking for ways to improve the drug-testing policy. Earlier this year, NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith said the marijuana policy is secondary when set against the failure to bring Human Growth Hormone testing into the game. Some believe relaxing marijuana rules could be linked to a deal that would bring in HGH testing.

"I've heard that in conversations," said Wiley, a plaintiff in the painkiller lawsuit. "Am I think it's despicable that you'd pit them against each other?"

The NFL drug policy has come under even more scrutiny this summer, after the NFL handed down a season-long suspension of Browns receiver Josh Gordon for multiple violations of the NFL substance-abuse policy. That suspension, when juxtaposed against the two-game ban Ray Rice received for domestic violence, has led some to say the league's priorities are out of whack.

In June, Harvard Medical School professor emeritus Lester Grinspoon, a forerunner of marijuana research, published an open letter to Goodell, urging him to drop urine testing for weed and, more importantly, fund a crash research project for a marijuana-based drug that can alleviate the consequences of concussion.

"As much as I love to watch professional football, I'm beginning to feel like a Roman in the days when they would send Christians to the lions," Grinspoon said. "I don't want to be part of an audience that sees kids ruin their future with this game, and then the league doesn't give them any recourse to try to protect themselves."

The league does fund sports-health research at the NIH, to the tune of a \$30 million donation in 2012. But the science moves slowly no matter where it's conducted and, as Vandrey says, "the NFL is in business for playing football, not doing scientific research."

Meanwhile, marijuana becomes more and more acceptable across America. Even with the Super Bowl being dubbed "The Stoner Bowl" and the issue hanging heavily over the NFL's marquee event, the league has shown no signs of quick movement.

The league's threshold for a positive test remains 10 times lower than that of WADA, which changed its limit last year in a nod to the reality that the drug is not a performance enhancer.

The NFL's conundrum is figuring a graceful way to keep tabs on those who use marijuana recklessly — or recreationally — while giving others a legitimate form of pain relief.

"I'd like to see us advance the subject to where we're all mature and we get it," Wiley said, "and we let players make the decision for themselves."

NFL



JOHN SLEEZER, KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Colts kicker Adam Vinatieri celebrates after kicking the extra point that gave the Colts their one-point margin of victory over the Chiefs in an AFC wild-card playoff on Jan. 4.

RG3 still struggling to master the slide

By JOSEPH WHITE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New coach, same old story for Robert Griffin III: He can't seem to avoid getting clobbered.

The debate that was so prevalent under Mike Shanahan remains under Jay Gruden, even though Gruden is trying to mold Griffin into less of a runner and more of a pocket passer.

RG3, who has had major knee surgery in both college and in the NFL, didn't have any designed runs in the Washington Redskins' 24-23 win over the Cleveland Browns on Monday night, but he scrambled four times for 24 yards and usually failed to seek safe ground.

Even when he did try to slide, it looked awkward — a craft he's far from mastering. Overall, it was hardly a surprise that one of his souvenirs from the performance was a bruised thigh.

Griffin and Gruden addressed the physical punishment immediately after the game, but it remained on Griffin's mind enough for him to take to Twitter as well, telling his followers: "Just want

y'all to know I will keep working on getting down" and not take the big hits.

Gruden's words, meanwhile, could have easily been Shanahan's at any point during Griffin's first two seasons.

"It's something we have to continue to talk to him about — how important he is to this team and this franchise," Gruden said. "When he gets out of the pocket, he needs to protect himself. He's had a habit in his career of being able to get himself out of those predicaments with his speed and his athleticism. But here it's a 16-game season, with the great talent across the league in the NFL, (and) he's got to pick his shots and learn how to get down a little bit better."

Griffin had an inconsistent training camp, and Monday's game reflected more of the same. The 49-yard pass to Andre Roberts and the 23-yarder to DeSean Jackson looked brilliant, but there was also an interception that hit the don't-try-this-at-home trifecta: Griffin was off-balance and under pressure, the throw was late, and the receiver was

PAT experiment results in more failed attempts

Kickers' opinions vary on conversion from 15-yard line

By BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Reviews have been mixed around the league for the NFL's experiment with longer kicks on extra points.

Regardless, it appears there's a future for them. Eight kicks from the longer distance — usually 33 yards — were missed during the first two weeks of the preseason. The 94.3 percent success rate (133-for-141) was below the regular-season rate (99.6 percent) from 2013 when the ball was snapped from the 2-yard line instead of the 15.

Only five of 1,267 short kicks were missed in 2013.

All of this summer's misses came with the ball snapped from the 15. Snaps will move back to the 2 this week and for the regular season.

NFL officiating director Dean Blandino says he believes longer PAT kicks are "in the league's near future." The results this preseason will be brought to the competition committee, and a proposal for change almost certainly will be presented to team owners at next March's annual meetings.

Blandino isn't sure the 15-yard line will be the focal point of any change.

As with any alterations to the game, coaches and players offered a variety of viewpoints.

San Francisco's veteran placekicker Phil Dawson didn't get a chance to try a long extra point because the 49ers didn't score any touchdowns in their first two exhibition games. He sees the positive and negative sides of a longer kick.

"It could rear its head in a game where the kicker hasn't been on the field in a while," Dawson said.

"It's hard to stay loose and then all of a sudden there's a sudden score, maybe a fumble recovery, kickoff return, interception return. You might not be super loose yet. It's one thing to go out there and pop through a 20-yarder. You buck up (another) 13-15 yards and you're a little stiff, you could possibly run into some problems there."

On the other foot ...

"Any rule change that's designed to highlight what guys do well, I'm all for it," Dawson added. "If that rule change is motivated by 'Man, our kickers are really good and we want to showcase what they do well, I'm all for it.'"

Jets kicker Nick Folk, who has never missed an extra point in his seven-year career, believes longer tries make the more accurate kickers even more valuable. But "I think most kickers want to keep it the same as it's been."

Indianapolis' Adam Vinatieri, who's won four Super Bowls as one of the NFL's best clutch kickers, made all three of his PATs this summer. He thinks weather can be a factor "when conditions get crummier" and thinks longer kicks might lead to more 2-point attempts.

"I think it could impact the outcome of games and you may see more teams go for 2 in those situations because they won't want to try (essentially) a 33-yard field goal," Vinatieri said.

There are other, more drastic options that might excite the fans if not the coaches and kickers. Perhaps eliminating the kick altogether and requiring teams to go for a conversion with a play.

AP Pro Football Writers Arnie Stapleton and Rob Maaddi, and Sports Writers Janie McCauley, Michael Marot and Tom Canavan contributed to this story.



RICHARD LUSKE/AP

Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III slides down in front of Cleveland Browns outside linebacker Christian Kirksey during Monday's preseason game in Landover, Md. Griffin took to Twitter after the game to tell fans he will keep working on getting down to avoid taking big hits.

covered.

Griffin was also whistled for a pair of false starts while in the shotgun. NFL Vice President of Officiating Dean Blandino explained the calls in a phone interview Tuesday.

"He's giving a hard count, but

that's not the foul. The voice inflection is not the foul," Blandino said. "There's too much movement [by] his upper body. It's a flinch, and it's a quick abrupt movement that simulates the start of the play."

Just something else for Griffin

to work on.

"He (the official) just said my shoulders were moving," Griffin said. "I talked to him about it, and all I can do is try not to move on hard counts."

AP Pro Football Writer Howard Fendrich contributed to this report.

SPORTS

HAZY situation

League seeks right answer for marijuana

BY EDDIE PELLIS
The Associated Press

Marijuana is casting an ever-thickening haze across NFL locker rooms, and it's not simply because more players are using it.

As attitudes toward the drug soften, and science slowly teases out marijuana's possible benefits for concussions and other injuries, the NFL is reaching a critical point in navigating its tenuous relationship with what is recognized as the analgesic of choice for many of its players.

"It's not, let's go smoke a joint," retired NFL defensive lineman Marvin Washington said. "It's, what if you could take something that helps you heal faster from a concussion, that prevents your equilibrium from being off for two weeks and your eyesight for being off for four weeks?"

One challenge the NFL faces is how to bring marijuana into the game as a pain reliever without condoning its use as a recreational drug. And facing a lawsuit filed on behalf of hundreds of former players complaining about the effects of prescription painkillers they say were pushed on them by team trainers and doctors, the NFL is looking for other ways to help players deal with the pain from a violent game.

SEE HAZY ON PAGE 30



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Roger Goodell photo by The Associated Press

ILLUSTRATION BY BEV SCHILLING/Stars and Stripes

Giants become first team in 28 years to win protest

MLB, Page 28

Stewart sitting out 3rd consecutive Cup race

Auto racing, Page 25